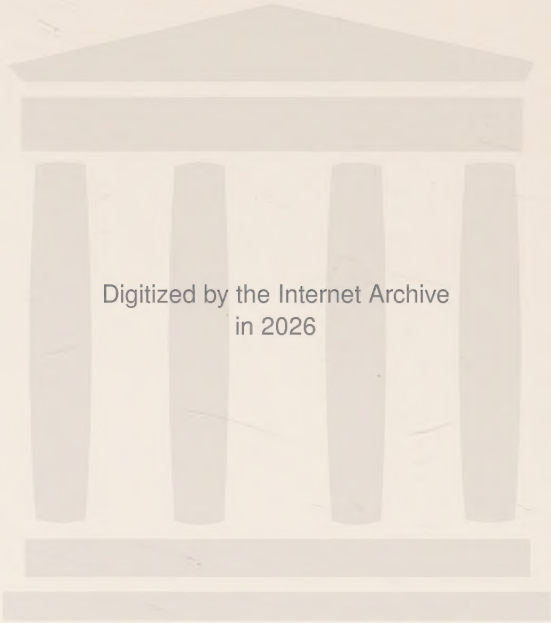
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MASTERPIECES OF ADVENTURE

Masterpieces of Adventure

In Four Volumes

ORIENTAL STORIES

Edited by
Nella Braddy

Garden City New York
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GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

TO

BLANCHE COLTON WILLIAMS, PH.D.

EDITOR'S NOTE

In these volumes the word *adventure* has been used in its broadest sense to cover not only strange happenings in strange places but also love and life and death—all things that have to do with the great adventure of living. Questions as to the fitness of a story were settled by examining the qualities of the narrative as such, rather than by reference to a technical classification of short stories.

It is the inalienable right of the editor of a work of this kind to plead copyright difficulties in extenuation for whatever faults it may possess. We beg the reader to believe that this is why his favorite story was omitted while one vastly inferior was included.

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MASTERPIECES OF ADVENTURE

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ORIENTAL STORIES

I

THE INLET OF PEACH BLOSSOMS

NATHAN PARKER WILLIS

THE Emperor Yuentsoong, of the dynasty Chow, was the most magnificent of the long-descended succession of Chinese sovereigns. On his first accession to the throne, his character was so little understood that a conspiracy was set on foot among the yellow-caps, or eunuchs, to put out his eyes, and place upon the throne the rebel, Szema, in whose warlike hands, they asserted, the empire would more properly maintain its ancient glory. The gravity and reserve which these myrmidons of the palace had construed into stupidity and fear, soon assumed another complexion, however. The eunuchs silently disappeared; the mandarins and princes whom they had seduced from their allegiance, were made loyal subjects by a generous

pardon; and in a few days after the period fixed upon for the consummation of the plot, Yuentsoong set forth in complete armour at the head of his troops to give battle to the rebel in the mountains.

In Chinese annals this first enterprise of the youthful Yuentsoong is recorded with great pomp and particularity. Szema was a Tartar prince of uncommon ability, young like the emperor, and, during the few last imbecile years of the old sovereign, he had gathered strength in his rebellion, till now he was at the head of ninety thousand men, all soldiers of repute and tried valour.

The historian goes on to record that Yuentsoong was victorious, and returned to the capital with the formidable enemy, whose life he had spared, riding beside him like a brother. The conqueror's career, for several years after this, seems to have been a series of exploits of personal valour, and the Tartar prince shared in all his dangers and pleasures, his inseparable friend. It was during this period of romantic friendship that one of the events occurred which have made Yuentsoong one of the idols of Chinese poetry.

By the side of a lake in a distant province of the empire, stood one of the imperial palaces of pleasure, seldom visited, and almost in ruins. Hither in one of his moody periods of repose from war, came the conqueror Yuentsoong, for the first time in years separated from his faithful Szema. In disguise, and with only one or two attendants, he established

himself in the long, silent halls of his ancestor Tsin-chemong, and with his boat upon the lake and his spear in the forest, seemed to find all the amusement of which his melancholy was susceptible. On a certain day in the latter part of April, the emperor had set his sail to a fragrant south wind, and reclining on the cushions of his bark, watched the shore as it softly and silently glided past, and the lake being entirely encircled by the imperial forest, he felt immersed in what he believed to be the solitude of a deserted paradise. After skirting the fringed sheet of water in this manner for several hours, he suddenly observed that he had shot through a streak of peach-blossoms floating from the shore, and at the same moment he became conscious that his boat was slightly headed off by a current setting outward. Putting up his helm, he returned to the spot, and beneath the drooping branches of some luxuriant willows, thus early in leaf, he discovered the mouth of an inlet, which, but for the floating blossoms it brought to the lake, would have escaped the notice of the closest observer. The emperor now lowered his sail, unshipped the slender mast, and betook him to the oars, and as the current was gentle, and the inlet wider within the mouth, he sped rapidly on, through what appeared to be but a lovely and luxuriant vale of the forest. Still, those blushing betrayers of some flowering spot beyond extended like a rosy clue before him, and with impulse of muscles swelled and indurated in

warlike exercise, the swift keel divided the besprent mirror winding temptingly onward, and, for a long hour, the royal oarsman untiringly threaded this sweet vein of the wilderness.

Resting a moment on his oars while the slender bark still kept her way, he turned his head toward what seemed to be an opening in the forest on the left, and in the same instant the boat ran, head on, to the shore, the inlet at this point almost doubling on its course. Beyond, by the humming of bees and the singing of birds, there should be a spot more open than the tangled wilderness he had passed, and disengaging his prow from the alders, he shoved the boat again into the stream, and pulled round a high rock, by which the inlet seemed to have been compelled to curve its channel. The edge of a bright green meadow now stole into the perspective, and still widening with his approach, disclosed a slightly rising terrace clustered with shrubs, and studded here and there with vases; and farther on, upon the same side of the stream, a skirting edge of peach-trees loaded with the gay blossoms which had guided him hither.

Astonished at the signs of habitation in what was well understood to be a privileged wilderness, Yuentsoong kept his boat in mid-stream, and with his eyes vigilantly on the alert, slowly made headway against the current. A few strokes with his oars, however, traced another curve of the inlet, and brought into view a grove of ancient trees

scattered over a gently ascending lawn, beyond which, hidden from the river till now by the projecting shoulder of a mound, lay a small pavilion with gilded pillars, glittering like fairy work in the sun. The emperor fastened his boat to a tree leaning over the water, and with his short spear in his hand, bounded upon the shore, and took his way toward the shining structure, his heart beating with a feeling of interest and wonder altogether new. On a nearer approach, the bases of the pillars seemed decayed by time and the gilding weather-stained and tarnished, but the trellised porticoes on the southern aspect were laden with flowering shrubs, in vases of porcelain, and caged birds sang between the pointed arches, and there were manifest signs of luxurious taste, elegance, and care.

A moment, with an indefinable timidity, the emperor paused before stepping from the green sward upon the marble floor of the pavilion, and in that moment a curtain was withdrawn from the door, and a female, with step suddenly arrested by the sight of the stranger, stood motionless before him. Ravished with her extraordinary beauty, and awe-struck with the suddenness of the apparition and the novelty of the adventure, the emperor's tongue cleaved to his mouth, and ere he could summon resolution, even for a gesture of courtesy, the fair creature had fled within, and the curtain closed the entrance as before.

Wishing to recover his composure, so strangely troubled, and taking it for granted that some other inmate of the house would soon appear, Yuengtsoong turned his steps aside to the grove, and with his head bowed, and his spear in the hollow of his arm, tried to recall more vividly the features of the vision he had seen. He had walked but a few paces, when there came toward him from the upper skirt of the grove a man of unusual stature and erectness, with white hair, unbraided on his shoulders, and every sign of age except infirmity of step and mien. The emperor's habitual dignity had now rallied, and on his first salutation, the countenance of the old man softened, and he quickened his pace to meet and give him welcome.

"You are noble?" he said with confident inquiry.

Yuentsoong coloured slightly.

"I am," he replied, "Lew-melin, a prince of the empire."

"And by what accident here?"

Yuentsoong explained the clue of the peach-blossoms, and represented himself as exiled for a time to the deserted palace upon the lakes.

"I have a daughter," said the old man, abruptly, "who has never looked on human face save mine."

"Pardon me!" replied his visitor; "I have thoughtlessly intruded on her sight, and a face more heavenly fair—"

The emperor hesitated but the old man smiled encouragingly.

"It is time," he said, "that I should provide a younger defender for my bright Teh-leen, and Heaven has sent you in the season of peach-blossoms, with provident kindness.* You have frankly revealed to me your name and rank. Before I offer you the hospitality of my roof I must tell you mine. I am Choo-tseen, the outlaw, once of your own rank and the general of the Celestial army."

The emperor started, remembering that this celebrated rebel was the terror of his father's throne.

"You have heard my history," the old man continued. "I had been, before my rebellion, in charge of the imperial palace on the lake. Anticipating an evil day, I secretly prepared this retreat for my family; and when my soldiers deserted me at the battle of Ke-chow, and a price was set upon my head, hither I fled with my women and children; and the last alive is my beautiful Teh-leen. With this brief outline of my life, you are at liberty to leave me as you came, or to enter my house, on the condition that you become the protector of my child."

The emperor eagerly turned toward the pavilion, and with a step as light as his own, the erect and stately outlaw hastened to lift the curtain before him. Leaving his guest for a moment in the outer apartment, he entered into an inner chamber in search of his daughter, whom he brought, panting with fear, and blushing with surprise and delight,

* The season of peach-blossoms was the only season of marriage in ancient China.

to her future lover and protector. A portion of an historical tale so delicate as the description of the heroine is not work for imitators, however, and we must copy strictly the portrait of the matchless Teh-leen, as drawn by Le-pih, the Anacreon of Chinese poetry, and the contemporary and favourite of Tuentsoong.

"Teh-leen was born while the morning star shone upon the bosom of her mother. Her eye was like the unblemished blue lily, with its light like the white gem unfractured. The plum-blossom is most fragrant when the cold has penetrated its stem, and the mother of Teh-leen had known sorrow. The head of her child drooped in thought, like a violet overladen with dew. Bewildering was Teh-leen. Her mouth's corners were dimpled, yet pensive. The arch of her brows was like the vein in the tulip's heart, and the lashes shaded the blushes on her cheek. With the delicacy of a pale rose, her complexion put to shame the floating light of day. Her waist, like a thread in fineness, seemed ready to break; yet it was straight and erect, and feared not the fanning breeze; and her shadowy grace was as difficult to delineate as the form of a white bird rising from the ground by moonlight. The natural gloss of her hair resembled the uncertain sheen of calm water, yet without the aid of false unguents. The native intelligence of her mind seemed to have gained strength by retirement, and he who beheld her, thought not of her as human. Of rare beauty,

of rarer intellect was Teh-leen, and her heart responded to the poet's lute."

We have not space, nor could we, without copying from the admired Le-pih, venture to describe the bringing of Teh-leen to court, and her surprise at finding herself the favourite of the emperor. It is a romantic circumstance, besides, which has had its parallels in other countries. But the sad sequel to the loves of poor Teh-leen is but recorded on the cold page of history; and if the poet, who wound up the climax of her perfections, with her susceptibility to his lute, embalmed her sorrows in verse, he was probably too politic to bring it ever to light. Pass we to those neglected and unadorned passages of her history.

Yuentsoong's nature was passionately devoted and confiding; and like two brothers with one favourite sister, lived together Teh-leen, Szema, and the emperor. The Tartar prince, if his heart knew a mistress before the arrival of Teh-leen at the palace, owned afterward no other than her; and fearless of check or suspicion from the noble confidence and generous friendship of Yuentsoong, he seemed to live but for her service, and to have neither energies nor ambitions except for the winning of her smiles. Szema was of great personal beauty, frank when it did not serve him to be wily, bold in his pleasures, and of manners almost femininely soft and voluptuous. He was renowned as a soldier, and for Teh-leen, he became a poet and master of

the lute; and like all men formed for ensnaring the hearts of women, he seemed to forget himself in the absorbing devotion to his idolatry. His friend, the emperor, was of another mould. Yuentsoong's heart had three chambers—love, friendship, and glory. Teh-leen was but a third in his existence, yet he loved her—the sequel will show how well! In person he was less beautiful than majestic, of large stature, and with a brow and lip naturally stern and lofty. He seldom smiled, even upon Teh-leen, whom he would watch for hours in pensive and absorbed delight; but his smile, when it did awake, broke over his sad countenance like morning. All men loved and honoured Yuentsoong, and all men, except only the emperor, looked on Szema with antipathy. To such natures as the former, women give all honour and approbation; but for such as the latter, they reserve their weakness!

Wrapt up in his friend and mistress, and reserved in his intercourse with his counsellors, Yuentsoong knew not that, throughout the imperial city, Szema was called "*the kieu*," or robber-bird, and his fair Teh-leen openly charged with dishonour. Going out alone to hunt as was his custom, and having left his signet with Szema, to pass and repass through the private apartments at his pleasure, his horse fell with him unaccountably in the open field. Somewhat superstitious, and remembering that good spirits sometimes "knit the grass," when other obstacles fail to bar our way to danger, the emperor

drew rein and returned to his palace. It was an hour after noon, and having dismissed his attendants at the city gate, he entered by a postern to the imperial garden, and bethought himself of the concealed couch in a cool grot by a fountain (a favourite retreat, sacred to himself and Teh-leen), where he fancied it would be refreshing to sleep away the sultriness of the remaining hours till evening. Sitting down by the side of the murmuring fount, he bathed his feet, and left his slippers on the lip of the basin to be unencumbered in his repose within, and so with unechoing step entered the resounding grotto. Alas! there slumbered the faithless friend with the guilty Teh-leen upon his bosom!

Grief struck through the noble heart of the emperor like a sword in cold blood. With a word he could consign to torture and death the robber of his honour, but there was agony in his bosom deeper than revenge. He turned silently away, recalled his horse and huntsmen, and, outstripping all, plunged on through the forest till night gathered around him.

Yuentsoong had been absent many days from his capitol, and his subjects were murmuring their fears for his safety, when a messenger arrived to the counsellors informing them of the appointment of the captive Tartar prince to the government of the province of Szechuen, the second honour of the Celestial empire. A private order accompanied the announcement, commanding the immediate departure of Szema for the scene of his new authority. In-

explicable as was this riddle to the multitude, there were those who read it truly by their knowledge of the magnanimous soul of the emperor; and among these was the crafty object of his generosity. Losing no time, he set forward with great pomp for Szechuen, and in their joy to see him no more in the palace, the slighted princes of the empire forgave him his unmerited advancement. Yuentsoong returned to his capitol; but to the terror of his counsellors and people, his hair was blanched white as the head of an old man! He was pale as well, but he was cheerful beyond his wont, and to Teh-leen untiring in pensive and humble attentions. He pleaded only impaired health and restless slumbers for nights of solitude. Once, Teh-leen penetrated to his lonely chamber, but by the dim night lamp she saw that the scroll over her window* was changed, and instead of the stimulus to glory which formerly hung in golden letters before his eyes, there was a sentence written tremblingly in black:—

"*The close wing of love covers the death-throb of honour.*"

Six months from this period the capital was thrown into a tumult with the intelligence that the province

* The most common decorations of rooms, halls, and temples in China are ornamental scrolls or labels of coloured paper, or wood, painted and gilded, and hung over doors or windows, and inscribed with a line or couplet conveying some allusion to the circumstances of the inhabitant, or some pious or philosophical axiom. For instance, a poetical one is recorded by Dr. Morrison:

"From the pine forest the azure dragon ascends to the milky way," typical of the prosperous man arising to wealth and honours.

of Szechuen was in rebellion, and Szema at the head of a numerous army on his way to seize the throne of Yuentsoong. This last sting betrayed the serpent even to the forgiving emperor, and tearing the reptile at last from his heart, he entered with the spirit of other times into warlike preparations. The imperial army was in a few days on its march, and at Keo-Yang the opposing forces met and prepared for encounter.

With a dread of the popular feeling toward Teh-leen, Yuentsoong had commanded for her a close litter, and she was borne after the imperial standard in the centre of the army. On the eve before the battle, ere the watch-fires were lit, the emperor came to her tent, set apart from his own, and with the delicate care and gentleness from which he never varied, inquired how her wants were supplied, and bade her, thus early, farewell for the night; his own custom of passing among his soldiers on the evening previous to an engagement, promising to interfere with what was usually his last duty before retiring to his couch.

Teh-leen on this occasion seemed moved by some irrepressible emotion, and as he rose to depart, she fell forward upon her face and bathed his feet with her tears. Attributing it to one of those excesses of feeling to which all, but especially hearts ill at ease, are liable, the noble monarch gently raised her, and, with repeated efforts at reassurance, committed her to the hands of her women. His own heart beat

far from tranquilly, for, in the excess of his pity for her grief, he had unguardedly called her by one of the sweet names of their early days of love—strange word now upon his lips—and it brought back, spite of memory and truth, happiness that would not be forgotten!

It was past midnight, and the moon was riding high in heaven, when the emperor, returning between the lengthening watch-fires, sought out the small lamp, which, suspended like a star above his own tent, guided him back from the irregular mazes of the camp. Paled by the intense radiance of the moonlight, the small globe of alabaster at length became apparent to his weary eye, and with one glance at the peaceful beauty of the heavens, he parted the curtained door beneath it, and stood within. The Chinese historian asserts that a bird, from whose wing Teh-leen had once plucked an arrow, restoring it to liberty and life, in grateful attachment to her destiny, had removed the lamp from the imperial tent and suspended it over hers. The emperor stood beside her couch. Startled at his inadvertent error, he turned to retire; but the lifted curtain let in a flood of moonlight upon the sleeping features of Teh-leen, and like dew-drops the undried tears glistened in her silken lashes. A lamp burned faintly in the inner apartment of the tent and her attendants slept soundly. His soft heart gave way. Taking up the lamp, he held it over his beautiful mistress, and once more gazed

passionately and unrestrainedly on her unparalleled beauty. The past—the early past—was alone before him. He forgave her—there as she slept, unconscious of the throbbing of his injured, but noble heart, so close beside her—he forgave her in the long silent abysses of his soul! Unwilling to wake her from her tranquil slumber, but promising to himself from that hour such sweets of confiding love as had well-nigh been lost to him forever, he imprinted one kiss upon the parted lips of Teh-leen, and sought his couch for slumber.

Ere daybreak the emperor was aroused by one of his attendants with news too important for delay. Szema, the rebel, had been arrested in the imperial camp, disguised, and on his way back to his own forces, and like wildfire, the information had spread among the soldiery, who, in a state of mutinous excitement, were with difficulty restrained from rushing upon the tent of Teh-leen. At the door of his tent, Yuentsoong found messengers from the alarmed princes and officers of the different commands, imploring immediate aid and the imperial presence to allay the excitement, and while the emperor prepared to mount his horse, the guard arrived with the Tartar prince, ignominiously tied, and bearing marks of rough usage from his indignant captors.

"Loose him!" cried the emperor in a voice of thunder.

The cords were severed, and with a glance whose

ferocity expressed no thanks, Szema reared himself up to his fullest height, and looked scornfully around him. Daylight had now broke, and as the group stood upon an eminence in sight of the whole army, shouts began to ascend, and the armed multitude, breaking through all restraint, rolled in toward the centre. Attracted by the commotion, Yuentsoong turned to give some orders to those near him, when Szema suddenly sprang upon an officer of the guard, wrenched his drawn sword from his grasp, and in an instant was lost to sight in the tent of Teh-leen. A sharp scream, a second of thought, and forth again rushed the desperate murderer, with his sword flinging drops of blood, and ere a foot stirred in the paralysed group, the avenging cimiter of Yuentsoong had cleft him to the chin.

A hush, as if the whole army were struck dumb by a bolt from heaven, followed this rapid tragedy. Dropping the polluted sword from his hand, the emperor, with uncertain step, and the pallor of death upon his countenance, entered the fatal tent.

He came no more forth that day. The army was marshalled by the princes, and the rebels were routed with great slaughter; but Yuentsoong never more wielded sword. "He pined to death," says the historian, "with the wane of the same moon that shone upon the forgiveness of Teh-leen."

II

IN THE PASHA'S GARDEN*

H. G. Dwight

At the old gentleman's side sat a young lady more beautiful than pomegranate blossoms, more exquisite than the first quarter moon viewed at twilight through the tops of oleanders.

—O. Henry: The Trimmed Lamp.

I

As the caïque glided up to the garden gate the three boatmen rose from their sheepskins and caught hold of iron clamps set into the marble of the quay. Shaban, the grizzled gate-keeper, who was standing at the top of the water-steps with his hands folded respectfully in front of him, came salaaming down to help his master out.

"Shall we wait, my Pasha?" asked the head *kaïkji*.

The Pasha turned to Shaban, as if to put a question. And as if to answer it Shaban said:

"The Madama is up in the wood, in the kiosque. She sent down word to ask if you would go up too."

"Then don't wait." Returning the boatmen's salaam, the Pasha stepped into his garden. "Is

*Reprinted by permission of the author.

there company in the kiosque or is Madama alone?" he inquired.

"I think no one is there—except Zümbül Agha," replied Shaban, following his master up the long central path of black and white pebbles.

"Zümbül Agha!" exclaimed the Pasha. But if it had been in his mind to say anything else he stopped instead to sniff at a rosebud. And then he asked: "Are we dining up there, do you know?"

"I don't know, my Pasha, but I will find out."

"Tell them to send up dinner anyway, Shaban. It is such an evening! And just ask Moustafa to bring me a coffee at the fountain, will you? I will rest a little before climbing that hill."

"On my head!" said the Albanian, turning off to the house.

The Pasha kept on to the end of the walk. Two big horse-chestnut trees, their candles just starting alight in the April air, stood there at the foot of a terrace, guarding a fountain that dripped in the ivied wall. A thread of water started mysteriously out of the top of a tall marble niche into a little marble basin, from which it overflowed by two flat bronze spouts into two smaller basins below. From them the water dripped back into a single basin still lower down, and so tinkled its broken way, past graceful arabesques and reliefs of fruit and flowers, into a crescent-shaped pool at the foot of the niche.

The Pasha sank down into one of the wicker

chairs scattered hospitably beneath the horse-chestnut trees, and thought how happy a man he was to have a fountain of the period of Sultan Ahmed III, and a garden so full of April freshness, and a view of the bright Bosphorus and the opposite hills of Europe and the firing West. How definitely he thought it I cannot say, for the Pasha was not greatly given to thought. Why should he be, since he possessed without that trouble a goodly share of what men acquire by taking thought? If he had been lapped in ease and security all his days, they numbered many more, did those days, than the Pasha would have chosen. Still, they had touched him but lightly, merely increasing the dignity of his handsome presence and taking away nothing of his power to enjoy his little walled world.

So he sat there, breathing in the air of the place and the hour, while gardeners came and went with their watering-pots, and birds twittered among the branches, and the fountain plashed beside him, until Shaban reappeared carrying a glass of water and a cup of coffee in a swinging tray.

"Eh, Shaban! It is not your business to carry coffee!" protested the Pasha, reaching for a stand that stood near him.

"What is your business is my business, *Pasha'm.* Have I not eaten your bread and your father's for thirty years?"

"No! Is it as long as that? We are getting old, Shaban."

"We are getting old," assented the Albanian simply.

The Pasha thought, as he took out his silver cigarette-case, of another Pasha who had complimented him that afternoon on his youthfulness. And, choosing a cigarette, he handed the case to his gatekeeper. Shaban accepted the cigarette and produced matches from his gay girdle.

"How long is it since you have been to your country, Shaban?"

The Pasha, lifting his little cup by its silver *zarf*, realised that he would not have sipped his coffee quite so noisily had his French wife been sitting with him under the horse-chestnut trees. But with his old Shaban he could still be a Turk.

"Eighteen months, my Pasha."

"And when are you going again?"

"In Ramazan, if God wills. Or perhaps next Ramazan. We shall see."

"Allah, Allah! How many times have I told you to bring your people here, Shaban? We have plenty of room to build you a house somewhere, and you could see your wife and children every day instead of once in two or three years."

"Wives, wives—a man will not die if he does not see them every day! Besides, it would not be good for the children. In Constantinople they become rascals. There are too many Christians." And he added hastily: "It is better for a boy to grow up in the mountains."

"But we have a mountain here, behind the house," laughed the Pasha.

"Your mountain is not like our mountains," objected Shaban gravely, hunting in his mind for the difference he felt but could not express.

"And that new wife of yours," went on the Pasha. "Is it good to leave a young woman like that? Are you not afraid?"

"No, my Pasha. I am not afraid. We all live together, you know. My brothers watch, and the other women. She is safer than yours. Besides, in my country it is not as it is here."

"I don't know why I have never been to see this wonderful country of yours, Shaban. I have so long intended to, and I never have been. But I must climb my mountain or they will think I have become a rascal too." And, rising from his chair, he gave the Albanian a friendly pat.

"Shall I come too, my Pasha? Zümbül Agha sent word——"

"Zümbül Agha!" interrupted the Pasha irritably. "No, you needn't come. I will explain to Zümbül Agha."

With which he left Shaban to pick up the empty coffee cup.

II

From the upper terrace a bridge led across the public road to the wood. If it was not a wood it was at all events a good-sized grove, climbing the steep

hillside very much as it chose. Every sort and size of tree was there, but the greater number of them were of a kind to be sparsely trimmed in April with a delicate green, and among them were so many twisted Judas trees as to tinge whole patches of the slope with their deep rose bloom. The road that the Pasha slowly climbed, swinging his amber beads behind him as he walked, zigzagged so leisurely back and forth among the trees that a carriage could have driven up it. In that way, indeed, the Pasha had more than once mounted to the kiosque, in the days when his mother used to spend a good part of her summer up there, and when he was married to his first wife. The memory of the two, and of their old-fashioned ways, entered not too bitterly into his general feeling of well-being, ministered to by the budding trees and the spring air and the sunset view. Every now and then an enormous plane tree invited him to stop and look at it, or a semi-circle of cypresses.

So at last he came to the top of the hill, where in a grassy clearing a small house looked down on the valley of the Bosphorus through a row of great stone pines. The door of the kiosque was open, but his wife was not visible. The Pasha stopped a moment, as he had done a thousand times before, and looked back. He was not the man to be insensible to what he saw between the columnar trunks of the pines, where European hills traced a dark curve against the fading sky, and where the sinuous waterway far be-

low still reflected a last glamour of the day. The beauty of it, and the sharp sweetness of the April air, and the infinitesimal sounds of the wood, and the half-conscious memories involved with it all, made him sigh. He turned and mounted the steps of the porch.

The kiosque looked very dark and unfamiliar as the Pasha entered it. He wondered what had become of Hélène—if by any chance he had passed her on the way. He wanted her. She was the expression of what the evening roused in him. He heard nothing, however, but the splash of water from a half-visible fountain. It reminded him for an instant of the other fountain, below, and of Shaban. His steps resounded hollowly on the marble pavement as he walked into the dim old saloon, shaped like a T, with the crossbar longer than the leg. It was still light enough for him to make out the glimmer of windows on three sides and the square of the fountain in the centre, but the painted domes above were lost in shadow.

The spaces on either side of the bay by which he entered, completing the rectangle of the kiosque, were filled by two little rooms opening into the cross of the T. He went into the left-hand one, where Hélène usually sat—because there were no lattices. The room was empty. The place seemed so strange and still in the twilight that a sort of apprehension began to grow in him, and he half wished he had brought up Shaban. He turned back to the second,

the latticed room—the harem, as they called it. Curiously enough it was Hélène who would never let him Europeanise it, in spite of the lattices. Every now and then he found out that she liked some Turkish things better than he did. As soon as he opened the door he saw her sitting on the divan opposite. He knew her profile against the checkered pallor of the lattice. But she neither moved nor greeted him. It was Zümbül Agha who did so, startling him by suddenly rising beside the door and saying in his high voice:

"Pleasant be your coming, my Pasha."

The Pasha had forgotten about Zümbül Agha; and it seemed strange to him that Hélène continued to sit silent and motionless on her sofa.

"Good evening," he said at last. "You are sitting very quietly here in the dark. Are there no lights in this place?"

It was again Zümbül Agha who spoke, turning one question by another:

"Did Shaban come with you?"

"No," replied the Pasha shortly. "He said he had a message, but I told him not to come."

"A-ah!" ejaculated the eunuch in his high drawl. "But it does not matter—with the two of us."

The Pasha grew more and more puzzled, for this was not the scene he had imagined to himself as he came up through the part in response to his wife's message. Nor did he grow less puzzled when the eunuch turned to her and said in another tone:

"Now will you give me that key?"

The French woman took no more notice of this question than she had of the Pasha's entrance.

"What do you mean, Zümbül Agha?" demanded the Pasha sharply. "That is not the way to speak to your mistress."

"I mean this, my Pasha," retorted the eunuch—"that some one is hiding in this chest and that Madama keeps the key."

That was what the Pasha heard, in the absurd treble of the black man, in the darkening room. He looked down and made out, beside the tall figure of the eunuch, the chest on which he had been sitting. Then he looked across at Hélène, who still sat silent in front of the lattice.

"What are you talking about?" he asked at last, more stupefied than anything else. "Who is it? A thief? Has any one—?" He left the vague question unformulated, even in his mind.

"Ah, that I don't know. You must ask Madama. Probably it is one of her Christian friends. But at least if it were a woman she would not be so unwilling to unlock her chest for us!"

The silence that followed, while the Pasha looked dumbly at the chest, and at Zümbül Agha, and at his wife, was filled for him with a stranger confusion of feelings than he had ever experienced before. Nevertheless he was surprisingly cool, he found. His pulse quickened very little. He told himself that it wasn't true and that he really must get rid

of old Zümbül after all, if he went on making such preposterous *gaffes* and setting them all by the ears. How could anything so baroque happen to him, the Pasha, who owed what he was to honourable fathers and who had passed his life honourably and peaceably until this moment? Yet he had had an impression, walking into the dark old kiosque and finding nobody until he found these two sitting here in this extraordinary way—as if he had walked out of his familiar garden, that he knew like his hand, into a country he knew nothing about, where anything might be true. And he wished, he almost passionately wished, that Hélène would say something, would cry out against Zümbül Agha, would lie even, rather than sit there so still and removed and different from other women.

Then he began to be aware that if it were true—if!—he ought to do something. He ought to make a noise. He ought to kill somebody. That was what they always did. That was what his father would have done, or certainly his grandfather. But he also told himself that it was no longer possible for him to do what his father and grandfather had done. He had been unlearning their ways too long. Besides, he was too old.

A sudden sting pierced him at the thought of how old he was, and how young Hélène. Even if he lived to be seventy or eighty she would still have a life left when he died. Yes, it was as Shaban said. They were getting old. He had never really felt

the humiliation of it before. And Shaban had said, strangely, something else—that his own wife was safer than the Pasha's. Still he felt an odd compassion for Hélène, too—because she was young, and it was Judas-tree time, and she was married to grey hairs. And although he was a Pasha, descended from great Pashas, and she was only a little French girl *quelconque*, he felt more afraid than ever of making a fool of himself before her—when he had promised her that she should be as free as any other European woman, that she should live her life. Besides, what had the black man to do with their private affairs?

"Zümbül Agha," he suddenly heard himself harshly saying, "is this your house or mine? I have told you a hundred times that you are not to trouble the Madama, or follow her about, or so much as guess where she is and what she is doing. I have kept you in the house because my father brought you into it; but if I ever hear of you speaking to Madama again, or spying on her, I will send you into the street. Do you hear? Now get out!"

"*Aman*, my Pasha! I beg you!" entreated the eunuch. There was something ludicrous in his voice, coming as it did from his height.

The Pasha wondered if he had been too long a person of importance in the family to realise the change in his position, or whether he really——

All of a sudden a checkering of lamplight flickered through the dark window, touched the Negro's

black face for a moment, travelled up the wall. Silence fell again in the little room—a silence into which the fountain dropped its silver patter. Then steps mounted the porch and echoed in the other room, which lighted in turn, and a man came in sight, peering this way and that, with a big white accordeon lantern in his hand. Behind the man two other servants appeared, carrying on their heads round wooden trays covered by figured silks, and a boy tugging a huge basket. When they discovered the three in the little room they salaamed respectfully.

"Where shall we set the table?" asked the man with the lantern.

For the Pasha the lantern seemed to make the world more like the place he had always known. He turned to his wife, apologetically.

"I told them to send dinner up here. It has been such a long time since we came. But I forgot about the table. I don't believe there is one here."

"No," uttered Hélène from her sofa, sitting with her head on her hand.

It was the first word she had spoken. But, little as it was, it reassured him, like the lantern.

"There is the chest," hazarded Zümbül Agha.

The interruption of the servants had for the moment distracted them all. But the Pasha now turned on him so vehemently that the eunuch salaamed in haste and went away.

"Why not?" asked Hélène, when he was gone. "We can sit on the cushions."

"Why not?" echoed the Pasha. Grateful as he was for the interruption, he found himself wishing, secretly, that Hélène had discouraged his idea of a picnic dinner. And he could not help feeling a certain constraint as he gave the necessary orders and watched the servants put down their paraphernalia and pull the chest into the middle of the room. There was something unreal and stage-like about the scene, in the uncertain light of the lantern. Obviously the chest was not light. It was an old cypress-wood chest that they had always used in the summer, to keep things in, polished a bright brown, with a little inlaid pattern of dark brown and cream colour running around the edge of each surface, and a more complicated design ornamenting the centre of the cover. He vaguely associated his mother with it. He felt a distinct relief when the men spread the cloth. He felt as if they had covered up more things than he could name. And when they produced candlesticks and candles, and set them on the improvised table and in the niches beside the door, he seemed to come back again into the comfortable light of common sense.

"This is the way we used to do when I was a boy," he said with a smile, when he and Hélène established themselves on sofa cushions on opposite sides of the chest. "Only then we had little tables six inches high, instead of big ones like this."

"It is rather a pity that we have spoiled all that," she said. "Are we any happier for perching on chairs around great scaffoldings, and piling the scaffoldings with so many kinds of porcelain and metal? After all, they knew how to live—the people who were capable of imagining a place like this. And they had the good taste not to fill a room with things. Your grandfather, was it?"

He had had a dread that she would not say anything, that she would remain silent and impenetrable as she had been before Zümbül Agha, as if the chest between them were a barrier that nothing could surmount. His heart lightened when he heard her speak. Was it not quite her natural voice?

"It was my great-grandfather, the Grand Vizier. They say he did know how to live—in his way. He built the kiosque for a beautiful slave of his, a Greek, whom he called Pomegranate."

"Madame Pomegranate! What a charming name! And that is why her cipher is everywhere. See?" She pointed to the series of cupboards and niches on either side of the door, dimly painted with pomegranate blossoms, and to the plaster reliefs around the hooded fireplace, and to the cluster of pomegranates that made a centre to the gilt and painted lattice-work of the ceiling. "One could be very happy in such a little house. It has an air—of being meant for moments. And you feel as if they had something to do with the wonderful way

it has faded." She looked as if she had meant to say something else, which she did not. But after a moment she added: "Will you ask them to turn off the water in the fountain? It is a little chilly, now that the sun has gone, and it sounds like rain —or tears."

The dinner went, on the whole, not so badly. There were dishes to be passed back and forth. There were questions to be asked or comments to be made. There were the servants to be spoken to. Yet, more and more, the Pasha could not help wondering. When a silence fell, too, he could not help listening. And least of all could he help looking at Hélène. He looked at her, trying not to look at her, with an intense curiosity, as if he had never seen her before, asking himself if there were anything new in her face, and how she would look if— Would she be like this? She made no attempt to keep up a flow of words, as if to distract his attention. She was not soft either; she was not trying to seduce him. And she made no show of gratitude toward him for having sent Zümbül Agha away. Neither did she by so much as an inflection try to insinuate or excuse or explain. She was what she always was, perfect—and evidently a little tired. She was indeed more than perfect, she was prodigious, when he asked her once what she was thinking about and she said Pandora, tapping the chest between them. He had never heard the story of that other Greek girl and her box, and she told him

gravely about all the calamities that came out of it, and the one gift of hope that remained behind.

"But I cannot be a Turkish woman long!" she added inconsequently with a smile. "My legs are asleep. I really must walk about a little."

When he had helped her to her feet she led the way into the other room. They had their coffee and cigarettes there. Hélène walked slowly up and down the length of the room, stopping every now and then to look into the square pool of the fountain and to pat her hair.

The Pasha sat down on the long low divan that ran under the windows. He could watch her more easily now. And the detachment with which he had begun to look at her grew in spite of him into the feeling that he was looking at a stranger. After all, what did he know about her? Who was she? What had happened to her, during all the years that he had not known her, in that strange free European life which he had tried to imitate, and which at heart he secretly distrusted? What had she ever really told him, and what had he ever really divined of her? For perhaps the first time in his life he realised how little one person may know of another, and particularly a man of a woman. And he remembered Shaban again, and that phrase about his wife being safer than Hélène. Had Shaban really meant anything? Was Hélène "safe"? He acknowledged to himself at last that the question was there in his mind, waiting to be answered.

Hélène did not help him. She had been standing for some time at an odd angle to the pool, looking into it. He could see her face there, with the eyes turned away from him.

"How mysterious a reflection is!" she said. "It is so real that you can't believe it disappears for good. How often Madame Pomegranate must have looked into this pool, and yet I can't find her in it. But I feel she is really there, all the same—and who knows who else."

"They say mirrors do not flatter," the Pasha did not keep himself from rejoining, "but they are very discreet. They tell no tales!"

Hélène raised her eyes. In the little room the servants had cleared the improvised table and had packed up everything again except the candles.

"I have been up here a long time," she said, "and I am rather tired. It is a little cold, too. If you do not mind I think I will go down to the house now, with the servants. You will hardly care to go so soon, for Zümbül Agha has not finished what he has to say to you."

"Zümbül Agha!" exclaimed the Pasha. "I sent him away."

"Ah, but you must know him well enough to be sure he would not go. Let us see." She clapped her hands. The servant of the lantern immediately came out to her. "Will you ask Zümbül Agha to come here?" she said. "He is on the porch."

The man went to the door, looked out, and said a word. Then he stood aside with a respectful salaam, and the eunuch entered. He negligently returned the salute and walked forward until his air of importance changed to one of humility at sight of the Pasha. Salaaming in turn, he stood with his hands folded in front of him.

"I will go down with you," said the Pasha to his wife, rising. "It is too late for you to go through the woods in the dark."

"Nonsense!" She gave him a look that had more in it than the tone in which she added: "Please do not. I shall be perfectly safe with four servants. You can tell them not to let me run away." Coming nearer, she put her hand into the bosom of her dress, then stretched out the hand toward him. "Here is the key—the key of which Zümbül Agha spoke—the key of Pandora's box. Will you keep it for me, please? *Au revoir.*"

And making a sign to the servants she walked out of the kiosque.

III

The Pasha was too surprised, at first, to move —and too conscious of the eyes of servants, too uncertain of what he should do, too fearful of doing the wrong, the un-European, thing. And afterward it was too late. He stood watching until the flicker of the lantern disappeared among the dark trees. Then his eyes met the eunuch's.

"Why don't you go down too?" suggested Zümbül Agha. The variable climate of a great house had made him too perfect an opportunist not to take the line of being in favour again. "It might be better. Give me the key and I will do what there is to do. But you might send up Shaban."

Why not, the Pasha secretly asked himself? Might it not be the best way out? At the same time he experienced a certain revulsion of feeling, now that Hélène was gone, in the way she had gone. She really was prodigious! And with the vanishing of the lantern that had brought him a measure of reassurance he felt the weight of an uncleared situation, fantastic but crucial, heavy upon him. And the Negro annoyed him intensely.

"Thank you, Zümbül Agha," he replied, "but I am not the nurse of Madama, and I will not give you the key."

If he only might, though, he thought to himself again!

"You believe her, this Frank woman whom you had never seen five years ago, and you do not believe me who have lived in your house longer than you can remember!"

The eunuch said it so bitterly that the Pasha was touched in spite of himself. He had never been one to think very much about minor personal relations, but even at such a moment he could see—was it partly because he wanted more time to make

up his mind?—that he had never liked Zümbül Agha as he liked Shaban, for instance. Yet more honour had been due, in the old family tradition, to the former. And he had been associated even longer with the history of the house.

"My poor Zümbül," he uttered musingly, "you have never forgiven me for marrying her."

"My Pasha, you are not the first to marry an unbeliever, nor the last. But such a marriage should be to the glory of Islam, and not to its discredit. Who can trust her? She is still a Christian. And she is too young. She has turned the world upside down. What would your father have said to a daughter-in-law who goes shamelessly into the street without a veil, alone, and who receives in your house men who are no relation to you or to her? It is not right. Women understand only one thing—to make fools of men. And they are never content to fool one."

The Pasha, still waiting to make up his mind, let his fancy linger about Zümbül Agha. It was really rather absurd, after all, what a part women played in the world, and how little it all came to in the end! Did the black man, he wondered, walk in a clearer cooler world, free of the clouds, the iridescences, the languors, the perfumes, the strange obsessions, that made others walk so often like madmen? Or might some tatter of preposterous humanity still work obscurely in him? Or a bitterness of not being like other men? That

perhaps was why the Pasha felt friendlier toward Shaban. They were more alike.

"You are right, Zümbül Agha," he said. "The world is upside down. But neither the Madama nor any of us made it so. All we can do is to try and keep our heads as it turns. Now, will you please tell me how you happened to be up here? The Madama never told you to come. You know perfectly well that the customs of Europe are different from ours, and that she does not like to have you follow her about."

"What woman likes to be followed about?" retorted the eunuch with a sly smile. "I know you have told me to leave her alone. But why was I brought into this house? Am I to stand by and watch dishonour brought upon it simply because you have eaten the poison of a woman?"

"Zümbül Agha," replied the Pasha sharply, "I am not discussing old and new or this and that, but I am asking you to tell me what all this speech is about."

"Give me that key and I will show you what it is about," said the eunuch, stepping forward.

But the Pasha found he was not ready to go so directly to the point

"Can't you answer a simple question?" he demanded irritably, retreating to the farther side of the fountain.

The reflection of the painted ceiling in the pool made him think of Hélène—and Madame Pome-

...anate. He stared into the still water as if to find ..élène's face there. Was any other face hidden beside it, mocking him?

But Zümbül Agha had begun again, doggedly:

"I came here because it is my business to be here. I went to town this morning. When I got back they told me that you were away and that the Madama was up here, alone. So I came. Is this a place for a woman to be alone in—a young woman, with men working all about and I don't know who, and a thousand ways of getting in and out from the hills, and ten thousand hiding places in the woods?"

The Pasha made a gesture of impatience, and turned away. But after all, what could one do with old Zümbül? He had been brought up in his tradition. The Pasha lighted another cigarette to help himself think.

"Well, I came up here," continued the eunuch, "and as I came I heard Madama singing. You know how she sings the songs of the Franks."

The Pasha knew, but he did not say anything. As he walked up and down, smoking and thinking, his eye caught in the pool a reflection from the other side of the room, where the door of the latticed room was and where the cypress-wood chest stood as the servants had left it in the middle of the floor. Was that what Hélène had stood looking at so long, he asked himself? He wondered that he could have sat beside it so quietly. It seemed now like something

dark and dangerous crouching there in the shadow of the little room.

"I sat down, under the terrace," he heard the eunuch go on, "where no one could see me, and I listened. And after she had stopped I heard——"

"Never mind what you heard," broke in the Pasha. "I have heard enough."

He was ashamed—ashamed and resolved. He felt as if he had been playing the spy with Zümbül Agha. And after all there was a very simple way to answer his question for himself. He threw away his cigarette, went forward into the little room, bent over the chest, and fitted the key into the lock.

Just then a nightingale burst out singing, but so near and so loud that he started and looked over his shoulder. In an instant he collected himself, feeling the black man's eyes upon him. Yet he could not suppress the train of association started by the impassioned trilling of the bird, even as he began to turn the key of the chest where his mother used to keep her quaint old silks and embroideries. The irony of the contrast paralysed his hand for a strange moment, and of the difference between this spring night and other spring nights when nightingales had sung. And what if, after all, only calamity were to come out of the chest, and he were to lose his last gift of hope! Ah! He knew at last what he would do! He quickly withdrew the key from the lock, stood up straight again, and looked at Zümbül Agha.

"Go down and get Shaban," he ordered, "and don't come back."

The eunuch stared. But if he had anything to say he thought better of uttering it. He saluted silently and went away.

IV

The Pasha sat down on the divan and lighted a cigarette. Almost immediately the nightingale stopped singing. For a few moments Zümbül Agha's steps could be heard outside. Then it became very still. The Pasha did not like it. Look which way he would he could not help seeing the chest—or listening. He got up and went into the big room, where he turned on the water of the fountain. The falling drops made company for him, and kept him from looking for lost reflections. But they presently made him think of what Hélène had said about them. He went out to the porch and sat down on the steps. In front of him the pines lifted their great dark canopies against the stars. Other stars twinkled between the trunks, far below, where the shore lights of the Bosphorus were. It was so still that water sounds came faintly up to him, and every now and then he could even hear nightingales on the European side. Another nightingale began singing in his own woods —the nightingale that had told him what to do, he said to himself. What other things the nightingales had sung to him, years ago! And how long the pines had listened there, still strong and green and rugged

and alive, while he, and how many before him, sat under them for a little while and then went away!

Presently he heard steps on the drive and Shaban came, carrying something dark in his hand.

"What is that?" asked the Pasha, as Shaban held it out.

"A pistol, my Pasha. Zümbül Agha told me you wanted it."

The Pasha laughed curtly.

"Zümbül made a mistake. What I want is a shovel, or a couple of them. Can you find such a thing without asking anyone?"

"Yes, my Pasha," replied the Albanian promptly, laying the revolver on the steps and disappearing again. And it was not long before he was back with the desired implements.

"We must dig a hole, somewhere, Shaban," said his master in a low voice. "It must be in a place where people are not likely to go, but not too far from the kiosque."

Shaban immediately started toward the trees at the back of the house. The Pasha followed him silently into a path that wound through the wood. A nightingale began to sing again, very near them—*the* nightingale, thought the Pasha.

"He is telling us where to go," he said.

Shaban permitted himself a low laugh.

"I think he is telling his mistress where to go. However, we will go too." And they did, bearing

away to one side of the path till they came to the foot of a tall cypress.

"This will do," said the Pasha, "if the roots are not in the way."

Without a word Shaban began to dig. The Pasha took the other spade. To the simple Albanian it was nothing out of the ordinary. What was extraordinary was that his master was able to keep it up, soft as the loam was under the trees. The most difficult thing about it was that they could not see what they were doing, except by the light of an occasional match. But at last the Pasha judged the ragged excavation of sufficient depth. Then he led the way back to the kiosque.

They found Zümbül Agha in the little room, sitting on the sofa with a pistol in either hand.

"I thought I told you not to come back!" exclaimed the Pasha sternly.

"Yes," faltered the old eunuch, "but I was afraid something might happen to you. So I waited below the pines. And when you went away into the woods with Shaban, I came here to watch." He lifted a revolver significantly. "I found the other one on the steps."

"Very well," said the Pasha at length, more kindly. He even found it in him at that moment to be amused at the picture the black man made, in his sedate frock coat, with his two weapons. And Zümbül Agha found no less to look at in the appearance of his master's clothes. "But now there is no

need for you to watch any longer," added the latter. "If you want to watch, do it at the bottom of the hill. Don't let any one come up here."

"On my head," said the eunuch. He saw that Shaban, as usual, was trusted more than he. But it was not for him to protest against the ingratitude of masters. He salaamed and backed out of the room.

When he was gone the Pasha turned to Shaban:

"This box, Shaban—you see this box? It has become a trouble to us, and I am going to take it out there."

The Albanian nodded gravely. He took hold of one of the handles, to judge the weight of the chest. He lifted his eyebrows.

"Can you help me put it on my back?" he asked.

"Don't try to do that, Shaban. We will carry it together." The Pasha took hold of the other handle. When they got as far as the outer door he let down his end. It was not light. "Wait a minute, Shaban. Let us shut up the kiosque, so that no one will notice anything." He went back to blow out the candles. Then he thought of the fountain. He caught a play of broken images in the pool as he turned off the water. When he had put out the lights and had groped his way to the door he found that Shaban was already gone with the chest. A last drop of water made a strange echo behind him in the dark kiosque. He locked the door and hurried after Shaban, who had succeeded in getting the chest on his

back. Nor would Shaban let the Pasha help him till they came to the edge of the wood. There, carrying the chest between them, they stumbled through the trees to the place that was ready.

"Now we must be careful," said the Pasha. "It might slip or get stuck."

"But are you going to bury the box too?" demanded Shaban, for the first time showing surprise.

"Yes," answered the Pasha. And he added: "It is the box I want to get rid of."

"It is a pity," remarked Shaban regretfully. "It is a very good box. However, you know. Now then!"

There was a scraping and a muffled thud, followed by a fall of earth and small stones on wood. The Pasha wondered if he would hear anything else. But first one and then another nightingale began to fill the night air with their April madness.

"Ah, there are two of them," remarked Shaban. "She will take the one that says the sweetest things to her."

The Pasha's reply was to throw a spadeful of earth on the chest. Shaban joined him with such vigour that the hole was very soon full.

"We are old, my Pasha, but we are good for something yet," said Shaban. "I will hide the shovels here in the bushes," he added, "and early in the morning I will come again, before any of those lazy gardeners are up, and fix it so that no one will ever know."

There at least was a person of whom one could be sure! The Pasha realised that gratefully, as they walked back through the park. He did not feel like talking, but at least he felt the satisfaction of having done what he had decided to do. He remembered Zümbül Agha as they neared the bottom of the hill. The eunuch had not taken his commission more seriously than it had been given, however, or he preferred not to be seen. Perhaps he wanted to reconnoitre again on top of the hill.

"I don't think I will go in just yet," said the Pasha, as they crossed the bridge into the lower garden. "I am rather dirty. And I would like to rest a little under the chestnut trees. Would you get me an overcoat please, Shaban, and a brush of some kind? And you might bring me a coffee, too."

How tired he was! And what a short time it was, yet what an eternity, since he last dropped into one of those wicker chairs! He felt for his cigarettes. As he did so he discovered something else in his pocket, something small and hard that at first he did not recognise. Then he remembered the key—the key. . . . He suddenly tossed it into the pool beside him. It made a sharp little splash, which was reëchoed by the dripping basins. He got up and felt in the ivy for the handle that shut off the water. At the end of the garden the Bosphorus lapped softly in the dark. Far away, up in the wood, the nightingales were singing.

III

THE QUEST OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE*

SIR HUGH CLIFFORD

ALL the wintry afternoon we had been worming our way down the Thames, the big steamer filtering slowly through the throng of crafts like a 'bus moving ponderously amid crowded traffic. When at last we won free of the river, the Channel chop took us on its knee and rocked us roughly, while the skud of wind and rain slapped us in the face with riotous horse-play. As we came up from dinner and struggled aft, our feet slipped and slithered over the wet decks, and the shouts of the frozen Lascars at the lookout reached us through the sopping gloom, despairing as the howls of souls in torment. The ugly, hopeless melancholy of our surroundings accorded well with the mood which possessed the majority of those on board; for we were outward bound, and men who leave England for the good of their purses carry heavy hearts with them at the start. In the smoking room, therefore, with coat-collars tugged up about our ears and hands thrust deeply into our pockets, we sat smok-

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ing with mournful earnestness, glaring at our neighbours with the open animosity of the genial Briton.

Through the thickening fog of the tobacco-smoke, the figure of a man seated immediately opposite to me was dimly visible; but presently his unusual appearance claimed my closer attention and aroused my curiosity. His emaciated body was wrapped in a huge ulster, from the up-turned collar of which a head emerged that I can only describe as being like nothing so much as that of a death's-head moth. He was clean-shaven, and his cheeks were as hollow as saucers; his temples were pinched and prominent; from the bottom of deeply sunken sockets little wild eyes glared like savage things held fast in a gin. The mouth was set hard, as though its owner were enduring agony, and trying his best to repress a scream. As much of his hair as his cap and his coat-collar suffered to be seen was of a dirty yellow-white; yet in some indefinable way the man did not give the impression of being old. Rather he seemed to be one prematurely broken; one who suffered acutely and unceasingly; one who, with rigid self-control, maintained a tight grip upon himself, as though all his nerves were on edge. I had marked a somewhat similar expression of concentrated determination upon the faces of fellow-passengers engaged in fighting the demon of sea-sickness; but this man sucked at his pipe, and obviously drew a measure of comfort from it, in a fashion which showed that he was indifferent to the choppy mo-

tion. Yet though those buried eyes of his were glaring and savage—eyes that seemed to be eternally seeking some means of escape from a haunting peril—they were not restless, but rather were fixed in a venomous scowl; while the man himself, dead quiet, save for the light that glinted from them, was apparently sunken in a fathomless abstraction.

All this I noted mechanically, but it was the extraordinary condition of his face that chiefly excited my wonder. It was literally pock-marked with little purple cicatrices, small oblong lumps, smooth and shining feebly in the lamplight, that rose above the surface of the skin, and ran this way and that at every imaginable angle. I had seen more than once the faces of German duellists wonderfully and fearfully beslashed; but the scars they wore were long and clean, wholly unlike the badly healed lumps which disfigured my queer *vis-à-vis*. I fell to speculating as to what could have caused such a multiplicity of wounds: not a gunpowder explosion, certainly, for the skin showed none of the blue tattooing inseparable from injuries so inflicted; nor yet the bursting of a gun, for that always makes at least one jagged cut, not innumerable tiny scars such as those at which I was looking. I could think of no solution that would fit the case; and as I watched, suddenly the man withdrew his hands from his pockets, waggling them before his face with a nervous motion as though he were warding off some invisible assailants. Then I saw that every

inch of the backs and palms, and as much of his wrists as were exposed to view, were pitted with cicatrices similar to those with which his face was bedecked.

"Evening, you folk!" said a nasal voice in the doorway, breaking discordantly upon the sulky silence which brooded over us; and I looked up to see the figure of a typical "down-easter," slim and alert, standing just within the room. He had a keen, hard face on him, like a meat-axe, and the wet rain stood upon it in drops. He jerked his head at us in collective greeting, walked through the haze of smoke with a free gait and swinging shoulders, and threw himself down in a heap on the horse-hair bench beside the man whose strange appearance had riveted my attention. Seated thus, he looked round at us with quick humorous glances, as though our British solemnity, which made each one of us grimly isolated in a crowd, struck him as at once amusing and impossible of endurance.

"Snakes!" he exclaimed genially. "This is *mighty* cheerful!" His strident twang seemed to cut wedges out of the foggy silence. "We look as though we had swallowed a peck of tenpenny nails, and the blamed things were sitting heavy on our stomachs. Come, let us be friendly. I ain't doing any trade in sore-headed bears. Wake up, sonny." And he dug his melancholy neighbour in the ribs with an aggressive and outrageous thumb.

It was for all the world as though he had touched

the spring that sets in motion the clockwork of a mechanical toy. The man's cap flew from his head —disclosing a scalp ill-covered with sparse hairs and scarred like his face—as he leaped to his feet with a scream, torn suddenly, as it were, from the depths of his self-absorbed abstraction. Casting quick nervous glances over his shoulder, he backed into the nearest corner, his hands clawing at the air, his eyes hunted, defiant, yet abject. His whole figure was instinct with terror—terror seeking impotently to defend itself against unnumbered enemies. His teeth were set, his gums drawn back over them in two rigid white lines; a sort of snarling cry broke from him—a cry that seemed to be the expression of furious rage, pain, and agonisingly concentrated effort.

It all took place in a fraction of a second—as quickly as a man jumps when badly startled—and as quickly he recovered his balance, and pulled himself together. Then he cast a murderous glance at the American—who at that moment presented a picture of petrified astonishment—let fly a venomous oath at him, and slammed out of the room in a towering rage.

"Goramercy!" ejaculated the American limply. "I want a drink. Who'll join me?" But no one responded to his invitation.

That was the occasion of my first meeting with Timothy O'Hara: but as I subsequently travelled half across the world in his company, was admitted

to his friendship, and heard him relate his experiences, not once but many times, I am able to supply the key to his extraordinary behaviour that evening. I regret that it is impossible to give his story in his own words, for he told it graphically, and with force; but unfortunately his very proper indignation got the better of his discretion, with the result that he frequently waxed blasphemous in the course of his narrative, and at times was rendered altogether inarticulate by rage. However, the version which I now offer to the reader is accurate in all essential details: and my own first-hand knowledge of that gentle race called Muruts, at whose hands O'Hara fared so evilly, has helped me to fill in such blanks as may have existed in the tale as it originally reached me.

A score of years ago there was a man in North Borneo, whose name does not matter—a man who had the itch of travel in him, and loved untrodden places for their own sake. He undertook to explore the interior of the no-man's-land which the Chartered Company euphemistically described as its "property." He made his way inland from the western coast, and little more was heard of him for several months. At the end of that time a haze of disquieting rumours, as impalpable as the used-up, fever-laden wind that blows eternally from the interior, reached the little squalid stations on the seashore; and shortly afterward the body of the ex-

plorer, terribly mangled and mutilated, was sluiced down-country by a freshet, and brought up on a sand-spit near the mouth of a river on the east coast. Here it was discovered by a couple of white men, who with the aid of a handful of unwilling natives buried it in becoming state, since it was the only thing with a European father and mother which had ever travelled across the centre of North Borneo, from sea to sea, since the beginning of time.

In life the explorer had been noted for his beard, a great yellow cascade of hair which fell down his breast from his lip to his waist; and when his corpse was found this ornament was missing. The Chartered Company, whose business it was to pay dividends in adverse circumstances, did not profess to be a philanthropical institution, and could not spend its hard-squeezed revenues upon putting the fear of death into people who have made too free with the lives of white folk, as is the practice in other parts of Asia. Therefore no steps were taken by the local administration to punish the Muruts of the interior who had amused themselves by putting the explorer to an ugly death; but the knowledge that the murdered man's beard had been shorn from his chin by some truculent savage, and was even then ornamenting the knife-handle of a Murut chief in the heart of the island rankled in the minds of the white men on the spot. The wise and prudent members of the community talked a great deal, said roundly that the thing was a shame and an abomi-

nation, and took care to let their discretion carry them no farther than the spoken word. The young and foolish did not say much, but the recovery of that wisp of hair became to many of them a tremendous ambition, a dream, something that made even existence in North Borneo tolerable, while it presented itself to their imaginations as a feat possible of accomplishment. With a few this dream became an *idée fixe*, an object in a life that otherwise was unendurable; and it may even have saved a few from the perpetration of more immediate follies. The quest would be the most hazardous conceivable, a fitting enterprise for men rendered desperate by the circumstances into the midst of which fate had thrust them.

Sitting at home in England, with pleasant things to distract the mind all about you, and with nothing at hand more dangerous than a taxicab, all this pother concerning the hairs off a dead man's chin may appeal to you as something absurdly sentimental and irrational; but try for the moment to place yourself in the position of an isolated white man at an outstation of North Borneo. Picture to yourself a tumble-down thatched bungalow standing on a roughly cleared hill, with four Chinese shops and a dilapidated police-station squatting on the bank of a black, creeping river. Rub in a smudge of blue-green forest, shutting you up on flanks, front, and rear. Fill that forest with scattered huts, wherein squalid natives live the lives of beasts—natives

whose language you do not know, whose ideas you do not understand, who make their presence felt only by means of savage howls raised by them in their drunken orgies—natives whose hatred of you can only be kept from active expression by such fear as your armed readiness may inspire. Add to this merciless heat, faint exhausted air, an occasional bout of the black fever of the country, and not enough of work to preserve your mind from rust. Remember that the men who are doomed to live in these places get no sport, have no recreations, no companionship; and that the long, empty, suffocating days trail by, one by one, bringing no hope of change, and that the only communication with the outer world is kept up fitfully by certain dingy steam-tramps which are always behind time, and which may, or may not, arrive once a month. Can you wonder that amid such surroundings men wax melancholy; that they take to brooding over all manner of trivial things in a fashion which is not quite sane; and that the knowledge that their continued existence is dependent upon the wholesome awe in which white folks are held sometimes gets upon their nerves, and makes them feverishly anxious to vindicate the honour of their race? When you have let the full meaning of these things sink into your minds, you will begin to understand why so much excitement prevailed in North Borneo concerning the reported ownership of the deceased explorer's beard.

Timothy O'Hara and Harold Bateman had lived lives such as those which I have described for half a dozen years or more. They had had ample leisure in which to turn the matter of the explorer's beard over and over in their minds, till the thought of it had bred something like fanaticism—a kind of still, white-hot rage within them. It chanced that their leave of absence fell due upon one and the same day. It followed that they put their heads together and decided to start upon a private raid of their own into the interior of the Murut country, with a view to redeeming the trophy. It also followed that they made their preparations with the utmost secrecy, and that they enlisted a dozen villainous little Dyaks from Sarawak to act as their punitive force. The whole thing was highly improper and very illegal, but it promised adventurous experiences, and both Bateman and O'Hara were young and not overwise. Also, it must be urged in extenuation of their conduct that they had the effects of some six years' crushing monotony to work off; and that they had learned to regard the Muruts of the interior as their natural enemies; and that the ugliness and the deadly solitude of their existence had rendered them savage, just as the tamest beast becomes wild and ferocious when it finds itself held in the painful grip of a trap.

I am in nowise concerned to justify their doings: my part is to record them. O'Hara and Bateman vanished one day from the last outpost of quasi-

civilisation, having given out that they were off up-country in search of big game—which was a fact. Their little expedition slipped into the forest, and the wilderness swallowed it up. When once they had pushed out into the unknown interior they were gone past power of recall, were lost as completely as a needle in a ten-acre hay-field; and they breathed more freely because they had escaped from the narrow zone wherein the law of the white man runs, and need guide themselves for the future merely by the dictates of their own rudimentary notions of right and wrong.

They had a very hard time of it, so far as I can gather; for the current of the rivers, which crept toward them, black and oily, from the upper country, was dead against them, and the rapids soon caused them to abandon their boats. Then they tramped it, trudging with dogged perseverance up and down the hills, clambering painfully up sheer ascents, slipping down the steep pitches on the other side, splashing and labouring through the swamps betwixt hill and hill, or wading waist-deep across wildernesses of rank *lalang*-grass, from the green surface of which the refracted heat smote them under their hat-brims with the force of blows. Aching in every limb, half-blinded by the sweat that trickled into their eyes, flayed by the sun, mired to the ears in the morasses, torn by thorn-thickets, devoured by tree-leeches, stung by all manner of jungle-insects, and oppressed by the weight of self-im-

posed effort that pride forbade them to abandon, they struggled forward persistently, fiercely, growing more savage and more vindictive at every painful step. The golden fleece of beard, which was the object of their quest, became an oriflamme, in the wake of which they floundered eternally through the inferno of an endless fight. Their determination to recover it became a madness, a possession: it filled their minds to the exclusion of aught else, nerved them to fresh endeavour, spurred them out of their weariness, and would not suffer them to rest. But the bitterness of their travail incensed them mightily against the Murut folk, whose lack of reverence for white men had imposed so tremendous a task upon these self-appointed champions of their race; and as they sat over their unpalatable meals when the day's toil was ended, they talked together in blood-thirsty fashion of the vengeances they would wreak and the punishment they would exact from the tribe which was discovered to be in possession of the object of their search.

One feature of their march was that prudence forbade a halt. The Murut of North Borneo is a person of mean understanding, who requires time wherein to set his slow intellect in motion. He is a dipsomaniac, a homicide by training and predilection, and he has a passion for collecting other people's skulls, which is an unscrupulous and as fanatical as that of the modern philatelist. Whenever he encounters a stranger, he immediately falls to coveting

that stranger's skull; but as he is a creature of poor courage it is essential to his comfort that he should win possession of it only by means that will not endanger his own skin. The question as to how such means may be contrived presents a difficult problem for his solution, and it takes his groping mind from two to three days in which to hit upon a workable plan. The explorer, as Bateman and O'Hara were aware, had lost his life because, overcome by fatigue, he had allowed himself to commit the mistake of spending more than a single night under a hospitable Murut roof-tree, and had so given time to his hosts to plot his destruction. Had he only held steadily upon his way, all might have been well with him: for in a country where every village is at enmity with its neighbours, a short march would have carried him into a stranger's land, which he should have been able to quit in its turn ere the schemes for his immolation hatched therein had had time in which to ripen. O'Hara and Bateman, therefore, no matter how worn out they might be by that everlasting, clambering tramp across that cruel huddle of hill-caps, were rowelled by necessity into pushing forward, and still forward, as surely as the day dawned.

Often the filth and squalor of the long airless huts—each one of which accommodated a whole village community in its dark interior, all the pigs and fowls of the place beneath its flooring, and as many blackened human skulls as could find hanging

space along its roof-beams—sickened them, and drove them forth to camp in the jungle. Here there were only wild beasts—self-respecting and on the whole cleanly beasts, which compared very favourably with the less attractive animals in the village huts—but a vigilant guard had to be maintained against possible surprise; and this, after a heart-breaking tramp, was hard alike upon white men and Dyaks.

The raiders had pitched their camp in such a place one evening; and as the party lacked meat, and the pigeons could be heard cooing in the tree-tops close at hand, O'Hara took his fowling piece and strolled off alone into the forest, with the intention of shooting a few birds for the pot. The jungle was very dense in this part of the country—so dense, indeed, that a man was powerless to see in any direction for a distance of more than a dozen yards; but the pigeons were plentiful, and as they fluttered from tree to tree O'Hara walked after them without in the least realising how far he was straying from his starting point. At last the fast-failing light arrested his attention, and as he stooped to pick up the last pigeon, the search for which among the brambles had occupied more time than he had fancied, it suddenly struck him that he ought to be returning to the camp, while a doubt as to its exact direction assailed him. He was in the very act of straightening himself again with a view to looking about him for some indication of

the path by which he had come when a slight crackle in the underwood smote upon his ear. He remained very still, stooping forward as he was, holding his breath, and listening intently. It flashed through his mind that the sound might have been made by one of the Dyaks, who perhaps had come out of the camp in search of him and he waited the repetition of the snapping noise with eagerness, hoping that it would tell him whether it were caused by man or beast. As he stood thus for an instant with bowed shoulders, the crackle came again, louder, crisper, and much clearer than before; and at the same moment, before he had time to change his attitude or to realise that danger threatened him, something smote him heavily in the back, bringing him prone to the earth with a grunt. The concussion was caused by some yielding substance, that was yet quick and warm; and the litter of dead leaves and the tangle of underwood combined to break his fall. He was not hurt, therefore, though the breath was knocked out of him, and that unseen something, which tumbled and writhed upon his back, pinned him to the ground. He skewed his head round, trying to see what had assailed him, and immediately a diabolical face peeped over his shoulder an inch or two above it. He only saw, as it were, in a flash; but the sight was one which, he was accustomed to say, he would never forget. In after years it was wont to recur to him in dreams, and as surely as it came it woke him with a scream.

It was a savage face, brown yet pallid, grimed with dirt and wood ashes, with a narrow retreating forehead, a bestial prognathous snout, and a tiny twitching chin. The little black eyes, fierce and excited, were ringed about with angry sores, for the eyelashes had been plucked out. The eyebrows had been removed, but from the upper lip a few coarse wires sprouted uncleanly. The face was split in twain by a set of uneven teeth pointed like those of a wild cat, and tightly clenched, while above and below them the gums snarled rigidly, bearing witness to the physical effort which their owner was making. The scalp was divided into even halves by a broad parting, on either side of which there rose a tangle of dirty, ill-kept hair, that was drawn back into a chignon, giving to the creature a curious sexless aspect. All these things O'Hara noted in the fraction of a second; and as the horror bred of them set him heaving and fighting as well as his cramped position made possible, a sharp knee-cap was driven into the back of his neck, and his head fell with a concussion that blinded him. For a moment he lay still and inert, and in that moment he was conscious of little deft hands, that flew this way and that, over, under, and around his limbs, and of the pressure of narrow withes, drawn suddenly taut, that ate into his flesh. Up to this time the whole affair has been transacted in a dead, unnatural silence that somehow gave to it the strangeness and unreality of a nightmare; but now, as

O'Hara lay prostrate with his face buried in the underwood, the even song of the forest insects, which rings through the jungle during the gloaming hour, was suddenly interrupted by an outbreak of queer sounds—by gurgling, jerky speech intermixed with shrill squeakings and whistlings, and by the clicking cackle which stands the Murut folk instead of laughter. Yet even now the voices of his captors were subdued and hushed, as though unwilling to be overheard; and O'Hara, understanding that the Muruts feared to be interrupted by their victim's friends, made shift to raise a shout, albeit the green stuff forced its way into his mouth and choked his utterance.

Immediately the little nimble hands were busy, clutching him afresh, while the tones of those inhuman voices shrilled and gurgled and clicked more excitedly than before. O'Hara was heaved and tugged, first one way, then another, until his body was rolled over on to its back, falling with a dull bump. He shouted once more, putting all the strength that was in him into the yell, and the nearest Murut promptly stamped on his mouth with his horny heel. O'Hara bit viciously at the thing, but his teeth could make no impression upon its leathery under-surface, and before he could shout again he found himself gagged with a piece of wood, which was bound in its place by a couple of withes. Despair seized him then, and for a moment or two he lay still, with the manhood knocked fairly out

of him by a crushing consciousness of impotence, while the gabble of squeak and whistle and grunt, still hushed cautiously, broke out more discordantly than ever.

The withes about his limbs bound O'Hara so cripplingly that only his neck was free to move; but presently, craning it upward, he caught sight of his persecutors for the first time. They formed a squalid group of little, half-starved, wizened creatures, not much larger than most European children of fourteen, but with brutal faces that seemed to bear the weight of whole centuries of care and animal indulgence. They were naked, save for their foul loin-clouts; they were abominably dirty, and their skins were smothered in leprous-looking ringworm; they had not an eyelash or an eyebrow among them, for the hairs had been plucked out by the root; but their scalps were covered by frowsy growths, gathered into loathsome chignons on the napes of their necks. Every man was armed with one or more spears, and from the waist of each a long knife depended, sheathed in a wooden scabbard hung with tufts of hair. One of them—the man of whose face O'Hara had caught a glimpse above his shoulder—flourished his sheathed knife insistently in his captive's face with grotesque gesticulations, and O'Hara shuddered every time that the disgusting tassels that bedecked the scabbard swept his cheek. The fading daylight was very dim now, enabling O'Hara to see only the

form of the things by which he was surrounded; *colour* had ceased to have any meaning in those gloomy forest aisles. The grinning savage prancing and gibbering around him, and brandishing that sheathed weapon with its revolting trophies, puzzled him. If he meant murder, why did he not draw his blade? In the depth of his misery the inconsequence of this war-dance furnished O'Hara with an additional torture.

Presently two of the Muruts came suddenly within his field of vision bearing a long green pole. This they proceeded to thrust between O'Hara's flesh and the withes that were entwined about him; and when this had been accomplished, the whole party set their shoulders under the extremities of the pole and lifted their prisoner clear of the ground. Then they bore him off at a sort of jog-trot.

The thongs, tightened fearfully by the pressure thus put upon them, pinched and bruised him pitilessly; and his head, lacking all support, hung down in an attitude of dislocation, waggling this way and that at every jolt; the blood surged into his brain, causing a horrible vertigo, and seeming to thrust his eyes almost out of their sockets; he thought that he could *feel* his limbs swelling above the biting grip of the withes, and an irresistible nausea seized him. Maddening cramps tied knots in his every muscle; and had his journey been of long duration, Timothy O'Hara would never have reached its end alive. Very soon, however, the decreased pace, and the

shrill whistling sounds which came from the noses of his Murut bearers, told him that the party was ascending a hill—for these strange folk do not pant like ordinary human beings, and the uncanny noise was familiar to O'Hara from many a toilsome march in the company of native porters. Presently, too, between the straining legs of the leading files, O'Hara caught a flying glimpse of distant fire; and that, he knew, betokened the neighbourhood of a village.

A few minutes later, just as he thought that he was about to lose consciousness, the village was reached —a long, narrow hut, raised on piles, and with a door at either end, from the thresholds of which crazy ladder-ways led to the ground. Up the nearest of these rude staircases the Muruts struggled with their burden, banging his head roughly against each untrimmed rung, and throwing him down on the bamboo flooring with a chorus of grunts. For a moment there was silence, while the entire community gathered round the white man, staring at him eagerly with a kind of ferocious curiosity. Then with one accord all the men, women, and children present set up a diabolical chorus of whoopings and yellings. They seemed to give themselves over to a veritable insanity of noise. Some, squatting on their heels, supporting the weight of their bodies on arms thrust well behind them, tilted their chins to the roof and howled like maniacs. Others, standing erect, opened their mouths to their fullest extent, and emitted a series of shrill blood-curdling bellows.

Others, again, shut their eyes, threw their arms aloft, and, concentrating every available atom of energy in the effort, screamed till their voices broke. The ear-piercing din sounded as though all the devils in hell had of a sudden broken loose. Heard from afar, the savage triumph, the diabolical delight that found in it their fitting expression, might well have made the blood run cold in the veins of the bravest; but heard close at hand by the solitary white man whose capture had evoked that hideous outcry, and who knew himself to be utterly at the mercy of these fiends, it was almost enough to unship his reason. O'Hara told me that from that moment he forgot the pains which his bonds had occasioned him, forgot even his desire to escape, and was filled with a tremendous longing to be put out of his agony—to be set free by death from this unspeakable inferno. His mind, he said, was working with surprising activity, and "as though it belonged to somebody else." In a series of flashes he began to recall all that he had ever heard of the manners and customs of the Muruts, of the strange uses to which they put their prisoners; and all the while he was possessed by a kind of restlessness that made him eager for them to do *something*—of no matter how awful a character—that would put a period to his unendurable suspense.

Meanwhile the Muruts were enjoying themselves thoroughly. Great earthenware jars, each sufficiently large to drown a baby with comfort, were

already standing round the enclosed veranda which formed the common-room of the village, on to which each family cubicle opened, and to these jars the Muruts—men, women, and children—repeatedly addressed themselves, squatting by them, and sucking up the abominable liquor which filled them through long bamboo tubes. Each toper, as he quitted the jar, fell to howling with redoubled energy; and as more and more of the fiery stuff was consumed, their cries became more savage, more inarticulate, and more diabolical.

Half a dozen men, however, were apparently busy in the performance of some task on a spot just behind O'Hara's head, for though they frequently paid visits of ceremony to the liquor-jars, they always staggered back to the same part of the room when their draughts were ended, and there fell to hacking and hammering at wood with renewed energy. O'Hara was convinced that they were employed in constructing some infernal instrument of torture; and the impossibility of ascertaining its nature was maddening, and set his imagination picturing every abominable contrivance for the infliction of anguish of which he had ever heard or read. And all the while the hideous orgies, for which his capture was the pretext, were waxing fast and furious.

Suddenly the hidden group behind him set up a shrill cat-call, and at the sound every Murut in sight leaped to his or her feet, and danced frantically with hideous outcry and maniacal laughter. A moment

later a rattan rope whined as it was pulled over the main beam of the roof with something heavy at its end; and as the slack of the cord was made fast to the wall-post opposite to him, O'Hara was aware of some large object suspended in mid-air, swinging out into the middle of the veranda immediately above him. This, as he craned his neck up at it, struggling to see it more clearly in the uncertain torch-light, was presently revealed as a big cage, an uneven square in shape, the bars of which were some six inches apart, saving on one side, where a wide gap was left. He had barely had time to make this discovery when a mob of Murut men and women rushed at him, cut the bonds that bound him, and mauling him mercilessly, lifted him up, and literally threw him into the opening formed by the gap. The cage rocked crazily, while the Muruts yelled their delight, and two of their number proceeded hastily to patch up the gap with cross-pieces of wood. Then the whole crowd drew away a little, though the hubbub never slackened, and O'Hara set his teeth to smother the groans which the pains of the removed bonds nearly wrung from him. For the time fear was forgotten in the acuteness of the agony which he endured; for as the blood began to flow freely once more, every inch of his body seemed to have been transformed into so many raging teeth. His extremities felt soft and flabby—cold, too, like jellies—but O'Hara was by nature a very strong man and at the time of his capture had been in the pink of

condition. In an incredibly short while, therefore, the pain subsided, and he began to regain the use of his cramped limbs.

He was first made aware of his recovered activity by the alacrity with which he bounded into the centre of the cage in obedience to a sharp prick in the back. He tried to rise to his feet, and his head came into stunning contact with the roof; then, in a crouching attitude, he turned in the direction whence the attack had reached him. What he saw filled him with horror. The leader of the Muruts who had captured him, his eyes bloodshot with drink, was staggering about in front of him with grotesque posturings, waving his knife in one hand and its wooden sheath in the other. It was the former, evidently, that had administered that painful prod to O'Hara's back, but it was the latter which chained the white man's attention even in that moment of whirling emotions, for from its base depended a long shaggy wisp of sodden yellow hair—the golden fleece of which O'Hara and Bateman were in search. In a flash the savage saw that his victim had recognised the trophy to which he had already been at some pains to direct to his attention, and the assembled Muruts gave unmistakable tokens that they all grasped the picturesqueness of the situation. They yelled and howled and bayed more frantically than ever; some of them rolled upon the floor, their limbs and faces contorted by paroxysms of savage merriment, while others staggered about, smiting

their fellows on their bare shoulders, squeaking like bats, and clicking like demoralised clockwork. A second prod with a sharp point made O'Hara shy across his narrow cage like a fly-bitten horse, and before he could recover his balance a score of delicately handled weapons inflicted light wounds all over his face and hands. As each knife touched him its owner put up his head and repeated some formula in a shrill sing-song, no word of which was intelligible to O'Hara save only the name of Kina-Balu—the great mountain which dominates North Borneo, and is believed by the natives to be the eternal resting-place of the spirits which have quitted the life of earth.

Then, for the first time, O'Hara understood what was happening to him. He had often heard of the ceremony known to the wild Muruts as a *bangun*, which has for its object the maintenance of communication between the living and the dead. He had even seen a pig hung up, as he was now hanging, while the tamer Muruts prodded it to death very carefully and slowly, charging it the while with messages for the spirits of the departed; and he remembered how the abominable cruelty of the proceeding had turned him sick, and had set him longing to interfere with native religious customs in defiance of the prudent government which he served. Now he was himself to be done to death by inches, just as the pig had died, and he knew that men had spoken truly when they had explained to him that the un-

fortunate quadruped was only substituted for a nobler victim as a concession to European prejudice, to the great discontent of the tame Muruts.

These thoughts rushed through his mind with the speed of lightning, and all the while it seemed to him that every particle of his mental forces was concentrated upon a single object—the task of defending himself against a crowd of persecutors. Crouching in the centre of the cage, snarling like a cat, with his eyes bursting from their sockets, his every limb braced for a leap in any direction, his hands scrabbling at the air to ward off the stabs, he faced from side to side, his breath coming in quick, noisy pants. Every second one or another of the points that assailed him made him turn about with a cry of rage, and immediately his exposed back was prodded by every Murut within reach. Suddenly he heard his own voice raised in awful curses and blasphemies, and the familiar tones of his mother-tongue smote him with surprise. He had little consciousness of pain as pain, only the necessity of warding off the points of his enemies' weapons presented itself to him as something that must be accomplished at all costs, and each separate failure enraged him. He bounded about his cage with an energy and an agility that astonished him, and the rocking of his prison seemed to keep time with the lilting of his thumping heart-beats. More than once he fell, and his face and scalp were prodded terribly ere he could regain his feet; often he warded off a thrust with

his bare hands. But of the wounds which he thus received he was hardly conscious; his mind was in a species of delirium of rage, and all the time he was torn with a fury of indignation because he, a white man, was being treated in this dishonouring fashion by a pack of despicable Muruts. But he received no serious injury; for the Muruts, who had many messages for their dead relations, were anxious to keep the life in him as long as might be, and in spite of their intoxication, prodded him with shrewdness and caution. How long it all lasted O'Hara never knew with certainty; but it was the exhaustion caused by loss of breath and blood, and by the wild leaping of that bursting heart of his, that caused him presently to sink on the floor of his cage in a swoon.

The Muruts, finding that he did not answer to their stabs, drew off and gathered eagerly around the liquor-jars. The killing would come soon after dawn—as soon, in fact, as their overnight orgies made it possible—when the prisoner would be set to run the gauntlet, and would be hacked to pieces after one final delicious *bangun*. It was essential, therefore, that enough strength should be left in him to show good sport; and in the meantime their villainous home-made spirits would bring that measure of happiness which comes to the Murut from being suffered, for a little space, to forget the fact of his own repulsive existence. Accordingly, with noisy hospitality, each man tried to make his neighbour

drink to greater excess than himself, and all proved willing victims. With hoots and squeals of laughter, little children were torn from their mothers' breasts and given to suck at the bamboo pipes, their ensuing intoxication being watched with huge merriment by men and women alike. The shouts raised by the revellers became more and more shaky, less and less articulate; over and over again the groups around the jars broke up, while their members crawled away, to lie about in deathlike stupors, from which they aroused themselves only to vomit and drink anew.

Long after this stage of the proceedings had been reached, O'Hara had recovered his senses; but prudence bade him lie as still as a mouse. Once or twice a drunken Murut lurched onto his feet and made a pass or two at him, and now and again he was prodded painfully; but putting forth all the self-control at his command, he gave no sign of life. At last every Murut in the place was sunken in abominable torpor, excepting only the chief, from whose knife-scabbard hung the tuft of hair which had once ornamented the chin of the explorer. His little red eyes were fixed in a drunken stare upon O'Hara, and the latter watched them with a fascination of dread through his half-closed lids. Over and over again the Murut crawled to the nearest liquor-jar, and sucked up the dregs with a horrible sibilant gurgling; and at times he even staggered to his feet, muttering and mumbling over his tiny, busy chin, waving his weapon uncertainly, ere he subsided in a limp heap

upon the floor. On each occasion he gave more evident signs of drowsiness and at last his blinking eyes were covered by their lashless lids.

At the same moment a gentle gnawing sound, which had been attracting O'Hara's attention for some minutes, though he had not dared to move by so much as a finger's breadth to discover its cause, ceased abruptly. Then the faintest ghost of a whisper came to his ears from below his cage, and, moving with the greatest caution, and peering down through the uncertain light, he saw that a hole had been made by sawing away two of the lathes which formed the flooring. In the black hole immediately beneath him the faces of two of his own Dyaks were framed, and even as he looked one of them hoisted himself into the hut, and began deftly to remove the bars of the cage, working as noiselessly as a shadow. The whole thing was done so silently, and O'Hara's own mind was so racked by the emotions which his recent experiences had held for him, that he was at first persuaded that what he saw, or rather fancied he saw, was merely a figment conjured up for his torture by the delirium which possessed him. He felt that if he suffered himself to believe in this mocking delusion even for an instant, the disappointment of discovering its utter unreality would drive him mad. He was already spent with misery, physical and mental; he was constantly holding himself in leash to prevent the commission of some insane extravagance; he was seized with an unreasoning

desire to scream. He fought with himself—a self that was unfamiliar to him, although its identity was never in doubt—as he might have fought with a stranger. He told himself that his senses were playing cruel pranks upon him, and that nothing should induce him to be deceived by them; and all the while—hope—mad, wild hysterical hope—was surging up in his heart, shaking him like an aspen, wringing unaccustomed tears from his eyes, and tearing his breast with noiseless sobs.

As he lay inert and utterly wretched, unable to bear up manfully under this new wanton torture of the mind, the ghost of the second Dyak clambered skilfully out of the darkness below the hut, and joined his fellow, who had already made a wide gap in the side of the cage. Then the two of them seized O'Hara, and with the same strange absence of sound lifted him bodily through the prison and through the hole in the flooring on to the earth below. Their grip upon his lacerated flesh hurt him acutely; but the very pain was welcome, for did it not prove the reality of his deliverers? What he experienced of relief and gratitude O'Hara could never tell us, for all he remembers is that, gone suddenly weak and plaintive as a child, he clung to the little Dyaks, sobbing broken-heartedly, and weeping on their shoulders without restraint or decency, in utter *abandon* of self-pity. Also he recalls dimly that centuries later he found himself standing in Bateman's camp, with his people gather-

ing about him, and that of a sudden he was aware that he was mother-naked. After that, so he avers, all is a blank.

The closing incidents of the story were related to me by Bateman one evening when I chanced to foregather with him in an up-country outpost in Borneo. We had been talking far into the night, and our *solitude à deux* and the lateness of the hour combined to thaw his usual taciturnity and to unlock his shy confidence. Therefore I was put in possession of a secret which until then, I believe, had been closely kept.

"It was an awful night," he said, "that upon which poor O'Hara was missing. The Dyaks had gone out in couples all over the place to try to pick up his trail, but I remained in the camp; for though there was a little moon, it was too dark for a white man's eyes to be of any good. What with the inactivity, and my fears for O'Hara, I was as 'jumpy' as you make 'em; and as the Dyaks began to drop in, two at a time, each couple bringing in their tale of failure, I worked myself up to such a state of depression and misery that I thought I must be going mad. Just about three o'clock in the morning the last brace of Dyaks turned up, and I was all of a shake when I saw that they had poor O'Hara with them. He broke loose from them and stumbled into the centre of the camp stark naked, and pecked almost to bits by those infernal Murut knives; but the

wounds were not overdeep, and the blood was caking over most of them. He was an awful sight, and I was for tending his hurt without delay; but he pushed me roughly aside, and I saw that his eyes were blazing with madness. He stood there in the midst of us all, throwing his arms above his head, cursing in English and in the vernacular, and gesticulating wildly. The Dyaks edged away from him, and I could see that his condition funked them mortally. I tried again and again to speak to him and calm him, but he would not listen to a word I said, and for full five minutes he stood there raving and ranting, now and again pacing frenziedly from side to side, pouring out a torrent of invective mixed with muddled orders. One of the Dyaks brought him a pair of trousers, and after looking at them as though he had never seen such things before, he put them on, and stood for a second or two staring wildly around him. Then he made a bee-line for a rifle, loaded it, and slung a bandolier across his naked shoulders; and before I could stay him he was marching out of the camp with the whole crowd of Dyaks at his heels.

"I could only follow. I had no fancy for being left alone in that wilderness, more especially just then, and one of the Dyaks told me that he was leading them back to the Murut village. You see I only speak Malay, and as O'Hara had been talking Dyak I had not been able to follow his ravings. Whatever lingo he jabbered, however, it was as

plain as a pikestaff that the fellow was mad as a hatter; but I had to stop explaining this to him, for he threatened to shoot me, and the Dyaks would not listen. They clearly thought that he was possessed by a devil, and they would have gone to hell at his bidding while their fear of him was upon them.

"And his madness made him cunning too, for he stalked the Murut den wonderfully neatly, and just as the dawn was breaking we found ourselves posted in the jungle within a few yards of the two doors, which were the only means of entrance or exit for the poor devils in the hut.

"Then O'Hara leaped out of his hiding place and began yelling like the maniac he was; and in an instant the whole of that long hut was humming like a disturbed beehive. Three or four squalid creatures showed themselves at the doorway nearest O'Hara, and he greeted them with half the contents of his magazine, and shrieked with laughter as they toppled onto the ground rolling over in their death-agony. There was such a wailing and crying set up by the other inhabitants of the hut as you never heard in all your life—it was just despair made vocal—the sort of outcry that a huge menagerie of wild animals might make when they saw flames lapping at their cages; and above it all I could hear O'Hara's demoniac laughter ringing with savage delight, and the war-whoops of those little devils of Dyaks, whose blood was fairly up now. The trapped

wretches in the hut made a stampede for the farther door; we could hear them scuffling and fighting with one another for the foremost places. They thought that safety lay in that direction; but the Dyaks were ready for them, and the bullets from their Winchesters drove clean through three and four of the squirming creatures at a time, and in a moment that doorway, too, and the ground about the ladder foot were a shambles.

"After that for a space there was a kind of awful lull within the hut, though without O'Hara and his Dyaks capered and yelled. Then the noise which our folk were making was drowned by a series of the most heart-breaking shrieks you ever heard or dreamed of, and immediately a second rush was made simultaneously at each door. The early morning light was getting stronger now, and I remember noting how incongruously peaceful and serene it seemed. Part of the hut near our end had caught fire somehow, and there was a lot of smoke, which hung low about the doorway. Through this I saw the crowd of Muruts struggle in that final rush, and my blood went cold when I understood what they were doing. Every man had a woman or a child held tightly in his arms—held in front of him as a buckler—and it was from these poor devils that those awful screams were coming. I jumped in front of the Dyaks and yelled to them in Malay to hold their fire; but O'Hara thrust me aside, and *shooed* the Dyaks on with shouts and

curses and peals of laughter, slapping his palm on his gunstock, and capering with delight and excitement. The Dyaks took no sort of heed of me, and the volleys met the Muruts like a wall of lead.

"I had slipped and fallen when O'Hara pushed me, and as I clambered on to my feet again I saw the mob of savages fall together and crumple up, for all the world as paper crumples when burned suddenly. Most of them fell back into the dark interior of the hut, writhing in convulsions above the litter of the dead; but one or two pitched forward headlong to the ground, and I saw a little brown baby, which had escaped unharmed, crawling about over the corpses, and squeaking like a wounded rabbit. I ran forward to save it, but a Dyak was too quick for me, and before I could get near it, he had thrown himself upon it, and . . . *ugh!*

"The Muruts began cutting their way through the flooring then, and trying to bolt into the jungle. One or two of them got away, I think; and this threw O'Hara into such a passion of fury that I half expected to see him kill some of the Dyaks. He tore around to the side of the hut, and I saw him brain one Murut as he made a rush from under the low floor. One end of the building was in roaring flames by this time, and half a dozen Dyaks had gone in at the other end and were bolting the wretched creatures from their hiding places, just as ferrets bolt rabbits from their burrows, while O'Hara and the other Dyaks waited for them outside.

They hardly missed one of them, sparing neither age nor sex, though I ran from one to another like a madman, trying to prevent them. It was awful . . . awful! and I was fairly blubbering with the horror of it, and with the consciousness of my own impotence. I was regularly broken up by it, and I remember at the last sitting down upon a log, burying my face in my hands, and crying like a child.

"The thing seemed to be over by then: there was no more bolting, and the Dyaks were beginning to clear out of the hut as the flames gained ground and made the place too hot for them. But, at the last, there came a terrific yell from the very heart of the fire, and a single Murut leaped out of the smoke. He was stark naked, for his loin clout had been burned to tinder; he was blackened by the smoke, and his long hair was afire behind him! His mouth was wide, and the cries that came from it went through and through my head, running up and up the scale till they hit upon a note the shrillness of which agonised me. Surrounded by the flames, he looked like a devil in the heart of the pit. In one scorched arm he brandished a long knife, the blade of which was red with the glare of the flames, and in the other was the sheath, blazing at one end, and decked at the other by a great tuft of yellow hair that was smouldering damply.

"As soon as he saw him O'Hara raised a terrible cry and threw himself at him. The two men grappled and fell, the knife and scabbard escaping from the

Murut's grasp and pitching straight into the fire. The struggle lasted for nearly a minute, O'Hara and his enemy rolling over and over one another, breathing heavily but making no other sound. Then something happened—I don't clearly know what; but the Murut's head dropped, and O'Hara rose up from his dead body, moving very stiffly. He stood for a moment so, looking round him in a dazed fashion, until his eyes caught mine. Then he staggered toward me, reeling like a tipsy man.

"'Mother of heaven!' he said thickly, 'what *have* I done?'

"He stared round him at the little brown corpses, doubled up in dislocated and distorted attitudes, and his eyes were troubled.

"'God forgive me!' he muttered. 'God forgive me!'

"Then he spun about on his heel, his hands outstretched above his head, his fingers clutching at the air, a thin foam forming on his lips, and before I could reach him he had toppled over in a limp heap upon the ground.

"I had an awful business getting O'Hara down-country. He was mad as a March hare for three weeks. But the Dyaks worked like bricks—though I could not bear the sight of them—and the currents of the rivers were in our favour when we reached navigable water. I know that O'Hara was mad that morning—no white man could have acted as he did unless he had been insane—and he always

swears that he has no recollection of anything that occurred after the Dyaks rescued him. I hope it may be so, but I am not certain. He is a changed man anyway, as nervous and jumpy as they make 'em, and I know that he is always brooding over that up-country trip of ours."

"Yes," I assented, "and he is constantly telling the first part of the story to every chance soul he meets."

"Exactly," said Bateman. "That is what makes me sometimes doubt the completeness of his oblivion concerning what followed. What do *you* think?"

IV

LEGEND OF COUNT JULIAN AND HIS FAMILY

WASHINGTON IRVING

MANY and various are the accounts given in ancient chronicles of the fortunes of Count Julian and his family, and many are the traditions on the subject still extant among the populace of Spain, and perpetuated in those countless ballads sung by peasants and muleteers, which spread a singular charm over the whole of this romantic land.

He who has travelled in Spain in the true way in which the country ought to be travelled,—sojourning in its remote provinces, rambling among the rugged defiles and secluded valleys of its mountains, and making himself familiar with the people in their out-of-the-way hamlets and rarely visited neighbourhoods,—will remember many a group of travellers and muleteers, gathered of an evening around the door or the spacious hearth of a mountain venta, wrapped in their brown cloaks, and listening with grave and profound attention to the long historic ballad of some rustic troubadour, either recited with the true *ore rotundo* and modulated cadences of

Spanish elocution, or chanted to the tinkling of a guitar. In this way he may have heard the doleful end of Count Julian and his family recounted in traditionary rhymes, that have been handed down from generation to generation. The particulars, however, of the following wild legend are chiefly gathered from the writings of the pseudo Moor Rasis; how far they may be safely taken as historic facts it is impossible now to ascertain; we must content ourselves, therefore, with their answering to the exactions of poetic justice.

. . . Everything had prospered with Count Julian. He had gratified his vengeance; he had been successful in his treason, and had acquired countless riches from the ruin of his country. But it is not outward success that constitutes prosperity. The tree flourishes with fruit and foliage while blasted and withering at the heart. Wherever he went, Count Julian read hatred in every eye. The Christians cursed him as the cause of all their woe; the Moslems despised and distrusted him as a traitor. Men whispered together as he approached, and then turned away in scorn; and mothers snatched away their children with horror if he offered to caress them. He withered under the execration of his fellow-men, and last, and worst of all, he began to loathe himself. He tried in vain to persuade himself that he had but taken a justifiable vengeance; he felt that no personal wrong can justify the crime of treason to one's country.

For a time he sought in luxurious indulgence to soothe or forget the miseries of the mind. He assembled round him every pleasure and gratification that boundless wealth could purchase, but all in vain. He had no relish for the dainties of his board; music had no charm wherewith to lull his soul, and remorse drove slumber from his pillow. He sent to Ceuta for his wife Frandina, his daughter Florinda, and his youthful son Alarbot; hoping in the bosom of his family to find that sympathy and kindness which he could no longer meet with in the world. Their presence, however, brought him no alleviation. Florinda, the daughter of his heart, for whose sake he had undertaken this signal vengeance, was sinking a victim to its effects. Wherever she went, she found herself a byword of shame and reproach. The outrage she had suffered was imputed to her as wantonness, and her calamity was magnified into a crime. The Christians never mentioned her name without a curse, and the Moslems, the gainers by her misfortune, spake of her only by the appellation of Cava, the vilest epithet they could apply to woman.

But the opprobrium of the world was nothing to the upbraiding of her own heart. She charged herself with all the miseries of these disastrous wars,—the deaths of so many gallant cavaliers, the conquest and perdition of her country. The anguish of her mind preyed upon the beauty of her person. Her eye, once soft and tender in its expression, be-

came wild and haggard; her cheek lost its bloom, and became hollow and pallid, and at times there was desperation in her words. When her father sought to embrace her she withdrew with shuddering from his arms, for she thought of his treason and the ruin it had brought upon Spain. Her wretchedness increased after her return to her native country, until it rose to a degree of frenzy. One day when she was walking with her parents in the garden of their palace, she entered a tower, and, having barred the door, ascended to the battlements. From thence she called to them in piercing accents, expressive of her insupportable anguish and desperate determination. "Let this city," said she, "be henceforth called Malacca, in memorial of the most wretched of women, who therein put an end to her days." So saying, she threw herself headlong from the tower and was dashed to pieces. The city, adds the ancient chronicler, received the name thus given it, though afterwards softened to Malaga, which it still retains in memory of the tragical end of Florinda.

The Countess Frandina abandoned this scene of woe, and returned to Ceuta, accompanied by her infant son. She took with her the remains of her unfortunate daughter, and gave them honourable sepulture in a mausoleum of the chapel belonging to the citadel. Count Julian departed for Carthagena, where he remained plunged in horror at this doleful event.

About this time, the cruel Suleiman, having destroyed the family of Muza, had sent an Arab general, named Alahor, to succeed Abdalasis as emir or governor of Spain. The new emir was of a cruel and suspicious nature, and commenced his sway with a stern severity that soon made those under his command look back with regret to the easy rule of Abdalasis. He regarded with an eye of distrust the renegado Christians who had aided in the conquest, and who bore arms in the service of the Moslems; but his deepest suspicions fell upon Count Julian. "He has been a traitor to his own countrymen," said he; "how can we be sure that he will not prove traitor to us?"

A sudden insurrection of the Christians who had taken refuge in the Asturian Mountains quickened his suspicions, and inspired him with fears of some dangerous conspiracy against his power. In the height of his anxiety, he bethought him of an Arabian sage named Yuza, who had accompanied him from Africa. This son of science was withered in form, and looked as if he had outlived the usual term of mortal life. In the course of his studies and travels in the East, he had collected the knowledge and experience of ages; being skilled in astrology, and, it is said, in necromancy, and possessing the marvellous gift of prophecy or divination. To this expounder of mysteries Alahor applied to learn whether any secret treason menaced his safety.

The astrologer listened with deep attention and

overwhelming brow to all the surmises and suspicions of the emir, then shut himself up to consult his books and commune with those supernatural intelligences subservient to his wisdom. At an appointed hour the emir sought him in his cell. It was filled with the smoke of perfumes; squares and circles and various diagrams were described upon the floor, and the astrologer was poring over a scroll of parchment, covered with cabalistic characters. He received Alahor with a gloomy and sinister aspect; pretending to have discovered fearful portents in the heavens, and to have had strange dreams and mystic visions.

"O emir," said he, "be on your guard! treason is around you and in your path; your life is in peril. Beware of Count Julian and his family."

"Enough," said the emir. "They shall all die! Parents and children,—all shall die!"

He forthwith sent a summons to Count Julian to attend him in Cordova. The messenger found him plunged in affliction for the recent death of his daughter. The count excused himself, on account of this misfortune, from obeying the commands of the emir in person, but sent several of his adherents. His hesitation, and the circumstance of his having sent his family across the straits to Africa, were construed by the jealous mind of the emir into proofs of guilt. He no longer doubted his being concerned in the recent insurrections, and that he had sent his family away, preparatory to an attempt, by force of arms, to subvert the Moslem

domination. In his fury he put to death Siseburto and Evan, the nephews of Bishop Oppas and sons of the former king, Witiza, suspecting them of taking part in the treason. Thus did they expiate their treachery to their country in the fatal battle of the Guadalete.

Alahor next hastened to Carthagena to seize upon Count Julian. So rapid were his movements that the count had barely time to escape with fifteen cavaliers, with whom he took refuge in the strong castle of Marcuello, among the mountains of Aragon. The emir, enraged to be disappointed of his prey, embarked at Carthagena and crossed the straits to Ceuta, to make captives of the Countess Frandina and her son.

The old chronicle from which we take this part of our legend presents a gloomy picture of the countess in the stern fortress to which she had fled for refuge,—a picture heightened by supernatural horrors. These latter the sagacious reader will admit or reject according to the measure of his faith and judgment; always remembering that in dark and eventful times, like those in question, involving the destinies of nations, the downfall of kingdoms, and the crimes of rulers and mighty men, the hand of fate is sometimes strangely visible, and confounds the wisdom of the worldly wise, by intimations and portents above the ordinary course of things. With this proviso, we make no scruple to follow the venerable chronicler in his narration.

Now it so happened that the Countess Frandina was seated late at night in her chamber in the citadel of Ceuta, which stands on a lofty rock, overlooking the sea. She was revolving in gloomy thought the late disasters of her family, when she heard a mournful noise like that of the sea-breeze moaning about the castle walls. Raising her eyes, she beheld her brother, the Bishop Oppas, at the entrance of the chamber. She advanced to embrace him, but he forbade her with a motion of his hand, and she observed that he was ghastly pale, and that his eyes glared as with lambent flames.

"Touch me not, sister," said he, with a mournful voice, "lest thou be consumed by the fire which rages within me. Guard well thy son, for bloodhounds are upon his track. His innocence might have secured him the protection of Heaven, but our crimes have involved him in our common ruin." He ceased to speak and was no longer to be seen. His coming and going were alike without noise, and the door of the chamber remained fast bolted.

On the following morning a messenger arrived with tidings that the Bishop Oppas had been made prisoner in battle by the insurgent Christians of the Asturias, and had died in fetters in a tower of the mountains. The same messenger brought word that the Emir Alahor had put to death several of the friends of Count Julian; had obliged him to fly for his life to a castle in Aragon, and was embarking with a formidable force for Ceuta.

The Countess Frandina, as has already been shown, was of courageous heart, and danger made her desperate. There were fifty Moorish soldiers in the garrison; she feared that they would prove treacherous, and take part with their countrymen. Summoning her officers, therefore, she informed them of their danger, and commanded them to put those Moors to death. The guards sallied forth to obey her orders. Thirty-five of the Moors were in the great square, unsuspicious of any danger, when they were severally singled out by their executioners, and, at a concerted signal, killed on the spot. The remaining fifteen took refuge in a tower. They saw the armada of the emir at a distance, and hoped to be able to hold out until its arrival. The soldiers of the countess saw it also, and made extraordinary efforts to destroy these internal enemies before they should be attacked from without. They made repeated attempts to storm the tower, but were as often repulsed with severe loss. They then undermined it, supporting its foundations by stanchions of wood. To these they set fire and withdrew to a distance, keeping up a constant shower of missiles to prevent the Moors from sallying forth to extinguish the flames. The stanchions were rapidly consumed, and when they gave way the tower fell to the ground. Some of the Moors were crushed among the ruins; others were flung to a distance and dashed among the rocks; those who survived were instantly put to the sword.

The fleet of the emir arrived at Ceuta about the hour of vespers. He landed, but found the gates closed against him. The countess herself spoke to him from a tower, and set him at defiance. The emir immediately laid siege to the city. He consulted the astrologer Yuza, who told him that for seven days his star would have the ascendant over that of the youth Alarbot, but after that time the youth would be safe from his power, and would effect his ruin.

Alahor immediately ordered the city to be assailed on every side, and at length carried it by storm. The countess took refuge with her forces in the citadel, and made desperate defence; but the walls were sapped and mined, and she saw that all resistance would soon be unavailing. Her only thoughts now were to conceal her child. "Surely," said she, "they will not think of seeking him among the dead." She led him therefore into the dark and dismal chapel. "Thou art not afraid to be alone in this darkness, my child?" said she.

"No, mother," replied the boy; "darkness gives silence and sleep." She conducted him to the tomb of Florinda. "Fearest thou the dead, my child?" "No mother; the dead can do no harm, and what should I fear from my sister?"

The countess opened the sepulchre. "Listen, my son," said she. "There are fierce and cruel people who have come hither to murder thee. Stay here in company with thy sister, and be quiet as

thou dost value thy life!" The boy, who was of a courageous nature, did as he was bidden, and remained there all that day, and all the night, and the next day until the third hour.

In the meantime the walls of the citadel were sapped, the troops of the emir poured in at the breach, and a great part of the garrison was put to the sword. The countess was taken prisoner and brought before the emir. She appeared in his presence with a haughty demeanour, as if she had been a queen receiving homage; but when he demanded her son, she faltered and turned pale, and replied, "My son is with the dead."

"Countess," said the emir, "I am not to be deceived; tell me where you have concealed the boy, or tortures shall wring from you the secret."

"Emir," replied the countess, "may the greatest torments be my portion, both here and hereafter, if what I speak be not the truth. My darling child lies buried with the dead."

The emir was confounded by the solemnity of her words; but the withered astrologer Yuza, who stood by his side regarding the countess from beneath his bushed eyebrows, perceived trouble in her countenance and equivocation in her words. "Leave this matter to me," whispered he to Alahor; "I will produce the child."

He ordered strict search to be made by the soldiery and he obliged the countess to be always present.

When they came to the chapel, her cheek turned pale and her lip quivered. "This," said the subtile astrologer, "is the place of concealment!"

The search throughout the chapel, however, was equally vain, and the soldiers were about to depart when Yuza remarked a slight gleam of joy in the eye of the countess. "We are leaving our prey behind," thought he; "the countess is exulting."

He now called to mind the words of her asseveration, that her child was with the dead. Turning suddenly to the soldiers he ordered them to search the sepulchres. "If you find him not," said he, "drag forth the bones of that wanton Cava, that they may be burnt, and the ashes scattered to the winds."

The soldiers searched among the tombs and found that of Florinda partly open. Within lay the boy in the sound sleep of childhood, and one of the soldiers took him gently in his arms to bear him to the emir.

When the countess beheld that her child was discovered, she rushed into the presence of Alahor, and, forgetting all her pride, threw herself upon her knees before him.

"Mercy! mercy!" cried she in piercing accents, "mercy on my son—my only child! O Emir! listen to a mother's prayer and my lips shall kiss thy feet. As thou art merciful to him so may the most high God have mercy upon thee, and heap blessings on thy head."

"Bear that frantic woman hence," said the emir, "but guard her well."

The countess was dragged away by the soldiery, without regard to her struggles and her cries, and confined in a dungeon of the citadel.

The child was now brought to the emir. He had been awakened by the tumult, but gazed fearlessly on the stern countenances of the soldiers. Had the heart of the emir been capable of pity, it would have been touched by the tender youth and innocent beauty of the child; but his heart was as the nether millstone, and he was bent upon the destruction of the whole family of Julian. Calling to him the astrologer, he gave the child into his charge with a secret command. The withered son of the desert took the boy by the hand and led him up the winding staircase of a tower. When they reached the summit, Yuza placed him on the battlements.

"Cling not to me, my child," said he; "there is no danger." "Father, I fear not," said the undaunted boy; "yet it is a wondrous height!"

The child looked around with delighted eyes. The breeze blew his curling locks from about his face, and his cheek glowed at the boundless prospect; for the tower was reared upon that lofty promontory on which Hercules founded one of his pillars. The surges of the sea were heard far below, beating upon the rocks, the sea-gull screamed and wheeled about the foundations of the tower, and the sails of

lofty caraccas were as mere specks on the bosom of the deep.

"Dost thou know yonder land beyond the blue water?" said Yuza.

"It is Spain," replied the boy; "it is the land of my father and my mother."

"Then stretch forth thy hands and bless it, my child," said the astrologer.

The boy let go his hold of the wall; and, as he stretched forth his hands, the aged son of Ishmael, exerting all the strength of his withered limbs, suddenly pushed him over the battlements. He fell headlong from the top of that tall tower, and not a bone in his tender frame but was crushed upon the rocks beneath.

Alahor came to the foot of the winding stairs.

"Is the boy safe?" cried he.

"He is safe," replied Yuza; "come and behold the truth with thine own eyes."

The emir ascended the tower and looked over the battlements, and beheld the body of the child, a shapeless mass on the rocks far below, and the sea-gulls hovering about it; and he gave orders that it should be thrown into the sea, which was done.

On the following morning the countess was led forth from her dungeon into the public square. She knew of the death of her child, and that her own death was at hand, but she neither wept nor supplicated. Her hair was dishevelled, her eyes were haggard with watching, and her cheek was as the

monumental stone; but there were the remains of commanding beauty in her countenance, and the majesty of her presence awed even the rabble into respect.

A multitude of Christian prisoners were then brought forth, and Alahor cried out: "Behold the wife of Count Julian! behold one of that traitorous family which has brought ruin upon yourselves and upon your country!" And he ordered that they should stone her to death. But the Christians drew back with horror from the deed, and said, "In the hand of God is vengeance; let not her blood be upon our heads." Upon this the emir swore with horrid imprecations that whoever of the captives refused should himself be stoned to death. So the cruel order was executed, and the Countess Frandina perished by the hands of her countrymen. Having thus accomplished his barbarous errand, the emir embarked for Spain, and ordered the citadel of Ceuta to be set on fire, and crossed the straits at night by the light of its towering flames.

The death of Count Julian, which took place not long after, closed the tragic story of his family. How he died remains involved in doubt. Some assert that the cruel Alahor pursued him to his retreat among the mountains, and, having taken him prisoner, beheaded him; others that the Moors confined him in a dungeon, and put an end to his life with lingering torments; while others affirm that the tower of the castle of Marcuello, near Huesca, in

Aragon, in which he took refuge, fell on him and crushed him to pieces. All agree that his latter end was miserable in the extreme and his death violent. The curse of Heaven, which had thus pursued him to the grave, was extended to the very place which had given him shelter; for we are told that the castle is no longer inhabited on account of the strange and horrible noises that are heard in it; and that visions of armed men are seen above it in the air; which are supposed to be the troubled spirits of the apostate Christians who favoured the cause of the traitor.

In after-times a stone sepulchre was shown, outside of the chapel of the castle, as the tomb of Count Julian; but the traveller and the pilgrim avoided it, or bestowed upon it a malediction; and the name of Julian has remained a by-word and a scorn in the land for the warning of all generations. Such ever be the lot of him who betrays his country.

V

A GOBOTO NIGHT

Jack London

I

AT Goboto the traders come off their schooners and the planters drift in from far, wild coasts, and one and all they assume shoes, white duck trousers, and various other appearances of civilisation. At Goboto mail is received, bills are paid, and newspapers, rarely more than five weeks old, are accessible; for the little island, belted with its coral reefs, affords safe anchorage, is the steamer port of call, and serves as the distributing point for the whole wide-scattered group.

Life at Goboto is heated, unhealthy, and lurid, and for its size it asserts the distinction of more cases of acute alcoholism than any other spot in the world. Guvutu, over in the Solomons, claims that it drinks between drinks. Goboto does not deny this. It merely states, in passing, that in the Goboton chronology no such interval of time is known. It also points out its import statistics, which show a far larger per capita consumption of spirituous liquors. Guvutu explains this on the basis that Goboto does

a larger business and has more visitors. Goboto retorts that its resident population is smaller and that its visitors are thirstier. And the discussion goes on interminably, principally because of the fact that the disputants do not live long enough to settle it.

Goboto is not large. The island is only a quarter of a mile in diameter, and on it are situated an admiralty coal-shed (where a few tons of coal have lain untouched for twenty years), the barracks for a handful of black labourers, a big store and warehouse with sheet-iron roofs, and a bungalow inhabited by the manager and his two clerks. They are the white population. An average of one man out of the three is always to be found down with fever. The job at Goboto is a hard one. It is the policy of the company to treat its patrons well, as invading companies have found out, and it is the task of the manager and clerks to do the treating. Throughout the year traders and recruiters arrive from far, dry cruises, and planters from equally distant and dry shores, bringing with them magnificent thirsts. Goboto is the Mecca of sprees, and when they have spread they go back to their schooners and plantations to recuperate.

Some of the less hardy require as much as six months between visits. But for the manager and his assistants there are no such intervals. They are on the spot, and week by week, blown in by monsoon or southeast trade, the schooners come to anchor,

cargoed with copra, ivory nuts, pearl-shell, hawksbill turtle, and thirst.

It is a very hard job at Goboto. That is why the pay is twice that on other stations, and that is why the company selects only courageous and intrepid men for this particular station. They last no more than a year or so, when the wreckage of them is shipped back to Australia, or the remains of them are buried in the sand across on the windward side of the islet. Johnny Bassett, almost the legendary hero of Goboto, broke all records. He was a remittance man with a remarkable constitution, and he lasted seven years. His dying request was duly observed by his clerks, who pickled him in a cask of trade-rum (paid for out of their own salaries) and shipped him back to his people in England.

Nevertheless, at Goboto, they tried to be gentlemen. For that matter, though something was wrong with them, they were gentlemen, and had been gentlemen. That was why the great unwritten rule of Goboto was that visitors should put on pants and shoes. Breech-clouts, lava-lavas, and bare legs were not tolerated. When Captain Jensen, the wildest of the Blackbirders though descended from old New York Knickerbocker stock, surged in, clad in loin-cloth, undershirt, two belted revolvers and a sheath-knife, he was stopped at the beach. This was in the days of Johnny Bassett, ever a stickler in matters of etiquette. Captain Jensen stood up in the sternsheets of his whaleboat and

denied the existence of pants on his schooner. Also, he affirmed his intention of coming ashore. They of Goboto nursed him back to health from a bullet-hole through his shoulder, and in addition handsomely begged his pardon, for no pants had they found on his schooner. And finally, on the first day he sat up, Johnny Bassett kindly but firmly assisted his guest into a pair of pants of his own. This was the great precedent. In all the succeeding years it had never been violated. White men and pants were undivorceable. Only niggers ran naked. Pants constituted caste.

II

On this night things were, with one exception, in nowise different from any other night. Seven of them, with glimmering eyes and steady legs, had capped a day of Scotch with swivel-sticked cocktails and sat down to dinner. Jacketed, trousered, and shod, they were: Jerry McMurtrey, the manager; Eddy Little and Jack Andrews, clerks; Captain Stapler, of the recruiting ketch *Merry;* Darby Shryleton, planter from Tito-Ito; Peter Gee, a half-caste Chinese pearl-buyer who ranged from Ceylon to the Paumotus, and Alfred Deacon, a visitor who had stopped off from the last steamer. At first wine was served by the black servants to those that drank it, though all quickly shifted back to Scotch and soda, pickling their food as they ate it, ere it went into their calcined, pickled stomachs.

Over their coffee, they heard the rumble of an anchor-chain through a hawse-pipe, tokening the arrival of a vessel.

"It's David Grief," Peter Gee remarked.

"How do you know?" Deacon demanded truculently, and then went on to deny the half-caste's knowledge. "You chaps put on a lot of side over a new chum. I've done some sailing myself, and this naming a craft when its sail is only a blur, or naming a man by the sound of his anchor—it's—it's unadulterated poppycock."

Peter Gee was engaged in lighting a cigarette, and did not answer.

"Some of the niggers do amazing things that way," McMurtrey interposed tactfully.

As with the others, this conduct of their visitor jarred on the manager. From the moment of Peter Gee's arrival that afternoon Deacon had manifested a tendency to pick on him. He had disputed his statements and been generally rude.

"Maybe it's because Peter's got Chink blood in him," had been Andrews' hypothesis. "Deacon's Australian, you know, and they're daffy down there on colour."

"I fancy that's it," McMurtrey had agreed. "But we can't permit any bullying, especially of a man like Peter Gee, who's whiter than most white men."

In this the manager had been in nowise wrong. Peter Gee was that rare creature, a good as well as clever Eurasian. In fact, it was the stolid integrity

of the Chinese blood that toned the recklessness and licentiousness of the English blood which had run in his father's veins. Also, he was better educated than any man there, spoke better English as well as several other tongues, and knew and lived more of their own ideals of gentlemanness than they did themselves. And, finally, he was a gentle soul. Violence he deprecated, though he had killed men in his time. Turbulence he abhorred. He always avoided it as he would the plague.

Captain Stapler stepped in to help McMurtrey:

"I remember, when I changed schooners and came into Altman, the niggers knew right off the bat it was me. I wasn't expected, either, much less to be in another craft. They told the trader it was me. He used the glasses, and wouldn't believe them. But they did know. Told me afterward they could see it sticking out all over the schooner that I was running her."

Deacon ignored him, and returned to the attack on the pearl-buyer.

"How do you know from the sound of the anchor that it was this whatever-you-called-him man?" he challenged.

"There are so many things that go to make up such a judgment," Peter Gee answered. "It's very hard to explain. It would require almost a text book."

"I thought so," Deacon sneered. "Explanation that doesn't explain is easy."

"Who's for bridge?" Eddy Little, the second clerk, interrupted, looking up expectantly and starting to shuffle. "You'll play, won't you, Peter?"

"If he does, he's a bluffer," Deacon cut back. "I'm getting tired of all this poppycock. Mr. Gee, you will favour me and put yourself in a better light if you tell how you know who that man was that just dropped anchor. After that I'll play you piquet."

"I'd prefer bridge," Peter answered. "As for the other thing, it's something like this: By the sound it was a small craft—no square-rigger. No whistle, no siren, was blown—again a small craft. It anchored close in—still again a small craft, for steamers and big ships must drop hook outside the middle shoal. Now the entrance is tortuous. There is no recruiting nor trading captain in the group who dares to run the passage after dark. Certainly no stranger would. There *were* two exceptions. The first was Margonville. But he was executed by the High Court at Fiji. Remains the other exception, David Grief. Night or day, in any weather, he runs the passage. This is well known to all. A possible factor, in case Grief were somewhere else, would be some young dare-devil of a skipper. In this connection, in the first place, I don't know of any, nor does anybody else. In the second place, David Grief is in these waters, cruising on the *Gunga*, which is shortly scheduled to leave here for Karo-Karo. I spoke to Grief, on the *Gunga*, in Sandfly

Passage, day before yesterday. He was putting a trader ashore on a new station. He said he was going to call in at Babo, and then come on to Goboto. He has had ample time to get here. I have heard an anchor drop. Who else than David Grief can it be? Captain Donovan is skipper of the *Gunga*, and him I know too well to believe that he'd run in to Goboto after dark unless his owner were in charge. In a few minutes David Grief will enter through that door and say, 'In Guvutu they merely drink between drinks.' I'll wager fifty pounds he's the man that enters and that his words will be, 'In Guvutu they merely drink between drinks.' "

Deacon was for the moment crushed. The sullen blood rose darkly in his face.

"Well, he's answered you," McMurtrey laughed genially. "And I'll back his bet myself for a couple of sovereigns."

"Bridge! Who's going to take a hand?" Eddy Little cried impatiently. "Come on, Peter!"

"The rest of you play," Deacon said. "He and I are going to play piquet."

"I'd prefer bridge," Peter Gee said mildly.

"Don't you play piquet?"

The pearl-buyer nodded.

"Then come on. Maybe I can show I know more about that than I do about anchors."

"Oh, I say——" McMurtrey began.

"You can play bridge," Deacon shut him off. "We prefer piquet."

Reluctantly, Peter Gee was bullied into a game that he knew would be unhappy.

"Only a rubber," he said, as he cut for deal.

"For how much?" Deacon asked.

Peter Gee shrugged his shoulders. "As you please."

"Hundred up—five pounds a game?"

Peter Gee agreed.

"With the lurch double, of course, ten pounds?"

"All right," said Peter Gee.

At another table four of the others sat in at bridge. Captain Stapler, who was no card-player, looked on and replenished the long glasses of Scotch that stood at each man's right hand. McMurtrey, with poorly concealed apprehension, followed as well as he could what went on at the piquet table. His fellow Englishmen as well were shocked by the behaviour of the Australian, and all were troubled by fear of some untoward act on his part. That he was working up his animosity against the half-caste, and that the explosion might come any time, was apparent to all.

"I hope Peter loses," McMurtrey said in an undertone.

"Not if he has any luck," Andrews answered. "He's a wizard at piquet. I know by experience."

That Peter Gee was lucky was patent from the continual badgering of Deacon, who filled his glass frequently. He had lost the first game, and, from his remarks, was losing the second, when the door opened and David Grief entered.

"In Guvutu they merely drink between drinks," he remarked casually to the assembled company, ere he gripped the manager's hand. "Hello, Mac! Say, my skipper's down in the whaleboat. He's got a silk shirt, a tie, and tennis shoes, all complete, but he wants you to send a pair of pants down. Mine are too small, but yours will fit him. Hello, Eddy! How's that *ngari-ngari?* You up, Jock? The miracle has happened. No one down with fever, and no one remarkably drunk." He sighed, "I suppose the night is young yet. Hello, Peter! Did you catch that big squall an hour after you left us? We had to let go the second anchor."

While he was being introduced to Deacon, McMurtrey dispatched a house-boy with the pants, and when Captain Donovan came in it was as a white man should—at least in Goboto.

Deacon lost the second game, and an outburst heralded the fact. Peter Gee devoted himself to lighting a cigarette and keeping quiet.

"What! — are you quitting because you're ahead?" Deacon demanded.

Grief raised his eyebrows questioningly to McMurtrey, who frowned back his own disgust.

"It's the rubber," Peter Gee answered.

"It takes three games to make a rubber. It's my deal. Come on!"

Peter Gee acquiesced, and the third game was on.

"Young whelp—he needs a lacing," McMurtrey muttered to Grief. "Come on, let us quit, you

chaps. I want to keep an eye on him. If he goes too far I'll throw him out on the beach, company instructions or no."

"Who is he?" Grief queried.

"A left-over from last steamer. Company's orders to treat him nice. He's looking to invest in a plantation. Has a ten-thousand-pound letter of credit with the company. He's got 'all-white Australia' on the brain. Thinks because his skin is white and because his father was once Attorney-General of the Commonwealth that he can be a cur. That's why he's picking on Peter, and you know Peter's the last man in the world to make trouble or incur trouble. Damn the company. I didn't engage to wet-nurse its infants with bank accounts. Come on, fill your glass, Grief. The man's a blighter, a blithering blighter."

"Maybe he's only young," Grief suggested.

"He can't contain his drink—that's clear." The manager glared his disgust and wrath. "If he raises a hand to Peter, so help me, I'll give him a licking myself, the little overgrown cad!"

The pearl-buyer pulled the pegs out of the cribbage board on which he was scoring and sat back. He had won the third game. He glanced across to Eddy Little, saying:

"I'm ready for the bridge, now."

"I wouldn't be a quitter," Deacon snarled.

"Oh, really, I'm tired of the game," Peter Gee assured him with his habitual quietness.

"Come on and be game," Deacon bullied. "One more. You can't take my money that way. I'm out fifteen pounds. Double or quits."

McMurtrey was about to interpose, but Grief restrained him with his eyes.

"If it positively is the last, all right," said Peter Gee, gathering up the cards. "It's my deal, I believe. As I understand it, this final is for fifteen pounds. Either you owe me thirty or we quit even?"

"That's it, chappie. Either we break even or I pay you thirty."

"Getting blooded, eh?" Grief remarked, drawing up a chair.

The other men stood or sat around the table, and Deacon played again in bad luck. That he was a good player was clear. The cards were merely running against him. That he could not take his ill luck with equanimity was equally clear. He was guilty of sharp, ugly curses, and he snapped and growled at the imperturbable half-caste. In the end Peter Gee counted out, while Deacon had not even made his fifty points. He glowered speechlessly at his opponent.

"Looks like a lurch," said Grief.

"Which is double," said Peter Gee.

"There's no need your telling me," Deacon snarled. "I've studied arithmetic. I owe you forty-five pounds. There, take it!"

The way in which he flung the nine five-pound

notes on the table was an insult in itself. Peter Gee was even quieter, and flew no signals of resentment.

"You've got fool's luck, but you can't play cards, I can tell you that much," Deacon went on. "I could teach you cards."

The half-caste smiled and nodded acquiescence as he folded up the money.

"There's a little game called casino—I wonder if you ever heard of it?—a child's game."

"I've seen it played," the half-caste murmured gently.

"What's that?" snapped Deacon. "Maybe you think you can play it?"

"Oh, no, not for a moment. I'm afraid I haven't head enough for it."

"It's a bully game, casino," Grief broke in pleasantly. "I like it very much."

Deacon ignored him.

"I'll play you ten quid a game—thirty-one points out," was the challenge to Peter Gee. "And I'll show you how little you know about cards. Come on! Where's a full deck?"

"No, thanks," the half-caste answered. "They are waiting for me in order to make up a bridge set."

"Yes, come on," Eddy Little begged eagerly. "Come on, Peter, let's get started."

"Afraid of a little game like casino," Deacon girded. "Maybe the stakes are too high. I'll play you for pennies—or farthings, if you say so."

The man's conduct was a hurt and an affront to all of them. McMurtrey could stand it no longer.

"Now hold on, Deacon. He says he doesn't want to play. Let him alone."

Deacon turned raging upon his host; but before he could blurt out his abuse, Grief had stepped into the breach.

"I'd like to play casino with you," he said.

"What do you know about it?"

"Not much, but I'm willing to learn."

"Well, I'm not teaching for pennies to-night."

"Oh, that's all right," Grief answered. "I'll play for almost any sum—within reason, of course."

Deacon proceeded to dispose of this intruder with one stroke.

"I'll play you a hundred pounds a game, if that will do you any good."

Grief beamed his delight. "That will be all right, very right. Let us begin. Do you count sweeps?"

Deacon was taken aback. He had not expected a Goboton trader to be anything but crushed by such a proposition.

"Do you count sweeps?" Grief repeated.

Andrews had brought him a new deck, and he was throwing out the joker.

"Certainly not," Deacon answered. "That's a sissy game."

"I'm glad," Grief coincided. "I don't like sissy games either."

"You don't, eh? Well, then, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll play for five hundred pounds a game."

Again Deacon was taken aback.

"I'm agreeable," Grief said, beginning to shuffle. "Cards and spades go out first, of course, and then big and little casino, and the aces in the bridge order of value. Is that right?"

"You're a lot of jokers down here," Deacon laughed, but his laughter was strained. "How do I know you've got the money?"

"By the same token I know you've got it. Mac, how's my credit with the company?"

"For all you want," the manager answered.

"You personally guarantee that?" Deacon demanded.

"I certainly do," McMurtrey said. "Depend upon it, the company will honour his paper up and pass your letter of credit."

"Low deals," Grief said, placing the deck before Deacon on the table.

The latter hesitated in the midst of the cut and looked around with querulous misgiving at the faces of the others. The clerks and captains nodded.

"You're all strangers to me," Deacon complained. "How am I to know? Money on paper isn't always the real thing."

Then it was that Peter Gee, drawing a wallet from his pocket and borrowing a fountain pen from McMurtrey, went into action.

"I haven't gone to buying yet," the half-caste explained, "so the account is intact. I'll just indorse it over to you, Grief. It's for fifteen thousand. There, look at it."

Deacon intercepted the letter of credit as it was being passed across the table. He read it slowly, then glanced up at McMurtrey.

"Is that right?"

"Yes. It's just the same as your own, and just as good. The company's paper is always good."

Deacon cut the cards, won the deal, and gave them a thorough shuffle. But his luck was still against him, and he lost the game.

"Another game," he said. "We didn't say how many, and you can't quit with me a loser. I want action."

Grief shuffled and passed the cards for the cut.

"Let's play for a thousand," Deacon said, when he had lost the second game. And when the thousand had gone the way of the two five hundred bets he proposed to play for two thousand.

"That's progression," McMurtrey warned, and was rewarded by a glare from Deacon. But the manager was insistent. "You don't have to play progression, Grief, unless you're foolish."

"Who's playing this game?" Deacon flamed at his host; and then, to Grief: "I've lost two thousand to you. Will you play for two thousand?"

Grief nodded, the fourth game began, and Deacon won. The manifest unfairness of such betting

was known to all of them. Though he had lost three games out of four, Deacon had lost no money. By the child's device of doubling his wager with each loss, he was bound, with the first game he won, no matter how long delayed, to be even again.

He now evinced an unspoken desire to stop, but Grief passed the deck to be cut.

"What?" Deacon cried. "You want more?"

"Haven't got anything yet," Grief murmured whimsically, as he began the deal. "For the usual five hundred, I suppose?"

The shame of what he had done must have tingled in Deacon, for he answered, "No, we'll play for a thousand. And say! Thirty-one points is too long. Why not twenty-one points out—if it isn't too rapid for you?"

"That will make it a nice, quick little game," Grief agreed.

The former method of play was repeated. Deacon lost two games, doubled the stake, and was again even. But Grief was patient, though the thing occurred several times in the next hour's play. Then happened what he was waiting for—a lengthening in the series of losing games for Deacon. The latter doubled to four thousand and lost, doubled to eight thousand and lost, and then proposed to double to sixteen thousand.

Grief shook his head. "You can't do that, you know. You're only ten thousand credit with the company."

"You mean you won't give me action?" Deacon asked hoarsely. "You mean that with eight thousand of my money you're going to quit?"

Grief smiled and shook his head.

"It's robbery, plain robbery," Deacon went on. "You take my money and won't give me action."

"No, you're wrong. I'm perfectly willing to give you what action you've got coming to you. You've got two thousand pounds of action yet."

"Well, we'll play it," Deacon took him up. "You cut."

The game was played in silence, save for irritable remarks and curses from Deacon. Silently the onlookers filled and sipped their long Scotch glasses. Grief took no notice of his opponent's outbursts, but concentrated on the game. He was really playing cards, and there were fifty-two in the deck to be kept track of, and of which he did keep track. Two thirds of the way through the last deal he threw down his hand.

"Cards put me out," he said. "I have twenty-seven."

"If you've made a mistake," Deacon threatened, his face white and drawn.

"Then I shall have lost. Count them."

Grief passed over his stack of takings, and Deacon, with trembling fingers, verified the count. He half shoved his chair back from the table and emptied his glass. He looked about him at unsympathetic faces.

"I fancy I'll be catching the next steamer for

Sydney," he said, and for the first time his speech was quiet and without bluster.

As Grief told them afterward: "Had he whined or raised a roar I wouldn't have given him that last chance. As it was, he took his medicine like a man, and I had to do it."

Deacon glanced at his watch, simulated a weary yawn, and started to rise.

"Wait," Grief said. "Do you want further action?"

The other sank down in his chair, strove to speak, but could not, licked his dry lips, and nodded his head.

"Captain Donovan here sails at daylight in the *Gunga* for Karo-Karo," Grief began with seeming irrelevance. "Karo-Karo is a ring of sand in the sea, with a few thousand cocoanut trees. Pandanus grows there, but they can't grow sweet potatoes nor taro. There are about eight hundred natives, a king and two prime ministers, and the last three named are the only ones who wear any clothes. It's a sort of God-forsaken little hole, and once a year I send a schooner up from Goboto. The drinking water is brackish, but old Tom Butler has survived on it for a dozen years. He's the only white man there, and he has a boat's crew of five Santa Cruz boys who would run away or kill him if they could. That is why they were sent there. They can't run away. He is always supplied with the hard cases from the plantations. There are no missionaries. Two

native Samoan teachers were clubbed to death on the beach when they landed several years ago.

"Naturally, you are wondering what it is all about. But have patience. As I have said, Captain Donovan sails on the annual trip to Karo-Karo at daylight to-morrow. Tom Butler is old, and getting quite helpless. I've tried to retire him to Australia, but he says he wants to remain and die on Karo-Karo, and he will in the next year or so. He's a queer old codger. Now the time is due for me to send some white man up to take the work off his hands. I wonder how you'd like the job. You'd have to stay two years.

"Hold on! I've not finished. You've talked frequently of action this evening. There's no action in betting away what you've never sweated for. The money you've lost to me was left you by your father or some other relative who did the sweating. But two years of work as trader on Karo-Karo would mean something. I'll bet the ten thousand I've won from you against two years of your time. If you win, the money's yours. If you lose, you take the job at Karo-Karo and sail at daylight. Now that's what might be called real action. Will you play?"

Deacon could not speak. His throat lumped and he nodded his head as he reached for the cards.

"One thing more," Grief said. "I can do even better. If you lose, two years of your time are mine —naturally without wages. Nevertheless, I'll pay you wages. If your work is satisfactory, if you ob-

serve all instructions and rules, I'll pay you five thousand pounds a year for two years. The money will be deposited with the company, to be paid to you, with interest, when the time expires. Is that all right?"

"Too much so," Deacon stammered. "You are unfair to yourself. A trader only gets ten or fifteen pounds a month."

"Put it down to action, then," Grief said, with an air of dismissal. "And before we begin, I'll jot down several of the rules. These you will repeat aloud every morning during the two years—if you lose. They are for the good of your soul. When you have repeated them aloud seven hundred and thirty Karo-Karo mornings I am confident they will be in your memory to stay. Lend me your pen, Mac. Now, let's see——"

He wrote steadily and rapidly for some minutes, then proceeded to read the matter aloud:

"I must always remember that one man is as good as another, save and except when he thinks he is better.

"No matter how drunk I am I must not fail to be a gentleman. A gentleman is a man who is gentle. Note: It would be better not to get drunk.

"When I play a man's game with men, I must play like a man.

"A good curse, rightly used and rarely, is an efficient thing. Too many curses spoil the cursing. Note: A curse cannot change a card sequence nor cause the wind to blow.

"There is no license for a man to be less than a man. Ten thousand pounds cannot purchase such a license."

At the beginning of the reading Deacon's face had gone white with anger. Then had arisen, from neck to forehead, a slow and terrible flush that deepened to the end of the reading.

"There, that will be all," Grief said, as he folded the paper and tossed it to the centre of the table. "Are you still ready to play the game?"

"I deserve it," Deacon muttered brokenly. "I've been an ass. Mr. Gee, before I know whether I win or lose, I want to apologise. Maybe it was the whiskey, I don't know, but I'm an ass, a cad, a bounder—everything that's rotten."

He held out his hand, and the half-caste took it beamingly.

"I say, Grief," he blurted out, "the boy's all right. Call the whole thing off, and let's forget it in a final nightcap."

Grief showed signs of debating, but Deacon cried:

"No; I won't permit it. I'm not a quitter. If it's Karo-Karo, it's Karo-Karo. There's nothing more to it."

"Right," said Grief, as he began the shuffle. "If he's the right stuff to go to Karo-Karo, Karo-Karo won't do him any harm."

The game was close and hard. Three times they divided the deck between them and "cards" was not scored. At the beginning of the fifth and last deal, Deacon needed three points to go out and Grief needed four. "Cards" alone would put Deacon out, and he played for "cards." He no

longer muttered or cursed, and played his best game of the evening. Incidentally he gathered in the two black aces and the ace of hearts.

"I suppose you can name the four cards I hold," he challenged, as the last of the deal was exhausted and he picked up his hand.

Grief nodded.

"Then name them."

"The knave of spades, the deuce of spades, the tray of hearts, and the ace of diamonds," Grief answered.

Those behind Deacon and looking at his hand made no sign. Yet the naming had been correct.

"I fancy you play casino better than I," Deacon acknowledged. "I can name only three of yours, a knave, an ace, and big casino."

"Wrong. There aren't five aces in the deck. You've taken in three and you hold the fourth in your hand now."

"By Jove, you're right," Deacon admitted. "I did scoop in three. Anyway, I'll make 'cards' on you. That's all I need."

"I'll let you save little casino—" Grief paused to calculate. "Yes, and the ace as well, and still I'll make 'cards' and go out with big casino. Play."

"No 'cards,' and I win!" Deacon exulted as the last of the hand was played. "I go out on little casino and the four aces. 'Big casino' and 'spades' only bring you to twenty."

Grief shook his head. "Some mistake, I'm afraid."

"No," Deacon declared positively. "I counted every card I took in. That's the one thing I was correct on. I've twenty-six, and you've twenty-six."

"Count again," Grief said.

Carefully and slowly, with trembling fingers, Deacon counted the cards he had taken. There were twenty-five. He reached over to the corner of the table, took up the rules Grief had written, folded them, and put them in his pocket. Then he emptied his glass, and stood up. Captain Donovan looked at his watch, yawned, and also arose.

"Going aboard, Captain?" Deacon asked.

"Yes," was the answer. "What time shall I send the whaleboat for you?"

"I'll go with you now. We'll pick up my luggage from the *Billy* as we go by. I was sailing on her for Babo in the morning."

Deacon shook hands all around, after receiving a final pledge of good luck on Karo-Karo.

"Does Tom Butler play cards?" he asked Grief.

"Solitaire," was the answer.

"Then I'll teach him double solitaire." Deacon turned toward the door, where Captain Donovan waited, and added with a sigh, "And I fancy he'll skin me, too, if he plays like the rest of you island men."

VI

THE TWO SAMURAI*

BYRON E. VEATCH

IT was in the autumn of 1904 that the Colonel told the story; Colonel M—, who, with his seventy years, his snowy hair and imperial, was yet as ruddy of cheek and as gallant of bearing as when in the old days he led the —th Cavalry through the deserts of the West. Since his retirement his home was at the Army and Navy Club, where his charming little dinners and his unfailing wit and eloquence as an after-dinner speaker made this courtly old warrior the most sought for man about the capital.

We had dined with the Colonel that evening, and as we entered the club smoking-rooms we overheard fragments of an animated conversation between two naval officers, who were debating the probable movements of the United States battleship squadron in case the feud between Japan and Russia should involve other nations. The relative strength of the Japanese and Russian navies, both as to material and personnel, was also under discussion. In sup-

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port of some claim as to Japanese superiority, one of the navy men took up an encyclopedia, from which he read the following:

"'*Samurai*—A term designating the feudal or governing class of old Japan; the ruling families from which the fighting clans were organised; a fighting man.'"

We found seats in the farther corner of the room and, after a few moments of silence, the Colonel remarked, in the musing tone which always promised a story:

"Boys, I once knew a Samurai; two of them, in fact; one to the manner born, the other a Samurai by adoption."

"Unlimber and get your range, Colonel, we are ready," remarked Sanderson of the Artillery, who would talk shop.

The old man smiled indulgently, and settling himself deeper into the big leather chair, replied:

"Well, then, if you youngsters really care to listen, and will allow an old fellow to tell his tale in his own fashion, you shall hear of the Samurai I have mentioned, two of the bravest men I ever met, and I have known several.

"At the close of the rebellion, after being mustered out as captain in the Tenth New York Cavalry, I re-entered the service as a lieutenant in the Fourth Regulars, and was at once ordered to Fort Sill. This was in '65, and for the next fifteen years we earned every dollar Uncle Sam paid us, and inci-

dentally rode our horses over some millions of square miles of his territory, between the Brazos and the Big Horn. It was scout and fight, winter and summer; no big affairs, you understand, but a row of some sort going all the while, for the Indians were ugly and required lots of licking to keep them on their reservations. April 5, 1880, I was transferred to the —th Cavalry, and, as ranking captain, assumed command of Fort Huachuca, Arizona, a three-company post only a few miles from the Sonora border.

"It was a favourite pastime of the redskins, for small parties of a dozen or twenty, to break from the reservation at night and, after raising sundry and divers varieties of hell, to slip across the border and take refuge in Mexico, sneaking back to their tepees after the flurry of pursuit was over.

"It was the first day after I assumed command that I took my own troop out on the parade-ground, put them through their paces, and gave them a thorough looking-over, to see what sort of an aggregation I had inherited. They were a rollicking lot of lads, not pretty to look at, but comfortable fellows to have at one's back when going into a scrimmage, as I learned upon more than one bitter day in the months that followed. After a few evolutions I felt, rather than saw, what they needed: they wanted a master; wanted a leader whose word should be to them the law and the gospel, from Proverbs to Revelations, and by Gad, sir, they

found their man right there and then Half of them didn't seem to know how to obey a command, and the other half didn't appear to be in any particular hurry. My subalterns, too, were apathetic, and inside of ten minutes I knew that my work was cut out for me, if I expected to make anything of Troop C.

"The only man in the company who seemed to know the game, and wanted to play it by the book, was the First Sergeant. I spotted him at once, and noticed that he not only understood and instantly obeyed a command, but that he mentally anticipated it, which showed me that he was letter-perfect in tactics.

"I didn't waste a great deal of time in letting them know the lay of the land. As they wheeled into line by fours, the order was 'Halt, Company front!' and then, riding very slowly, I passed down the line, and over the head of his motionless horse I looked squarely through each trooper's eyes and down into the subcellar of his immortal soul. At the end of that slow riding I knew my men, and they knew that I knew them.

"From that moment began the upbuilding of Company C, and before six pay-days had passed it was the best drilled, best natured, hardest fighting troop that ever swung the sabre or followed the guidon.

"As the Company broke ranks I could see that the men were speaking eagerly among themselves,

evidently discussing their new 'Old Man.' I had my eye on that First Sergeant, and after stables that evening I sent an orderly for him. A few minutes later he strode up to the open door of my quarters, saluted and stood at attention, waiting while I looked him over from end to end. He was a soldierly-looking chap, square-shouldered, well set up, long of limb and slender, and looked as hard as iron. But it was at his face that I looked longest. It was not a happy face—some great sorrow or great disappointment had left its shadow there—but it had character written all over. Prominent cheek-bones, a good nose and chin, with deep-set gray eyes, that looked at a man, not past him. For a full minute he stood quietly returning my gaze, with never a flinch nor the tremor of an eyelid.

"'What's your name, Sergeant?'

"'Reynolds, sir.'

"'How long have you been in the service?'

"'Nearly three years, sir.'

"'Step inside, Sergeant, I want to have a talk with you.'

"As he passed the threshold he removed his hat, and right there his Captain came very nearly committing an unpardonable breach of discipline, for the impulse came over me to get out of my chair and offer the gentleman a seat. For Sergeant Reynolds was a gentleman, as one could see the instant his hat came off and that magnificent forehead appeared in evidence. His was a splendid head, and

every line of his face and brow bore the unmistakable stamp of intellectual force and honesty of purpose. Why was such a man as this serving as a private soldier in the regular army? I was distinctly rattled for a minute, and in the little silence which ensued I found myself speculating as to what queer turn of Fate's fickle wheel had brought him there. Such cases were not infrequent, and many an interesting identity lay concealed under Uncle Sam's army blue.

"Whatever had been his past, I felt sure he was the one man in the company who could be of most assistance in bringing the troop up to concert pitch, so I went straight to the point:

"'Sergeant, Troop C requires some good, hard drill and better discipline. The men need a little ginger and soldierly spirit infused into them, and a man in the ranks, who has his heart in the work, can prove himself of invaluable assistance to his officers in bringing about the desired conditions. I had an eye on you this afternoon and, if I am not mistaken, you know your business. Your Captain is going to depend on you to help him round the troop into shape, and, willingly or unwillingly, you're going to give him that help. I sent for you to tell you this and to know whether you will do it because you want to, or because you have to.'

"Quick as a shot came his reply, 'Both, sir.'

"There was a faint smile on his lip and a pleased look in his eyes which told me that my First Sergeant

was mine. I dismissed him without further questioning, for I felt intuitively that no casual inquiry would secure Sergeant Reynolds' real history, much as I wanted it. A few minutes' private and pointed conversation with each of my lieutenants that evening, and I was ready for the siege of drill which began the following day. Lord! How I did work those fellows for the next week or two! The men grumbled and kicked, as is the soldier's prerogative, but they worked. Hennessy, the biggest, brawniest trooper of the lot, probably voiced the general sentiment when one hot afternoon he unburdened himself to Reynolds.

"'What do yez make av it, Sargint? Is this a rest cure that the dear Captin is thryin' on us? Bedad, I'd rayther be diggin' post holes in the stony corner of hell than workin' as a hoss sojer unther that man! Sure, me liver is jolted loose and the seat of me panties is wored out entoirely with this ridin' and chargin' up and down the landscape from mornin' till night. I've dhrilled and dhrilled till the damn thing has gone to me head, and I find meself dhrillin' in me slape. There's wan good thing about it, thank Hivin, the ould divil is takin' his own medicine, for he's dhrillin' wid us.'

"And so it was. I took my share of the drudgery, but it paid, for the troop began immediately to show improvement. Reynolds' influence in the ranks was soon apparent, the men showing more and more interest as the days went by.

"One evening an ambulance from Benson brought in the long delayed mails, and as the leathern pouches were tumbled out the men gathered about, eager for news from the San Carlos Agency, where a break was rumoured. On the seat beside the driver sat a young man in civilian dress, unmistakably a foreigner.

" 'Who's your friend, Bill?' sang out one of the crowd.

" 'Recruity,' answered the driver, with a grin; 'a gent from Japan who is stuck on sojerin' and has come out here to get some.'

"A delighted yell came from the boys, as they closed in and began reaching for the newcomer.

" 'If the lady wud put her fut in me hand, I'd be proud to assist her to land in Huachuca,' said Hennessy, as he grabbed the stranger by the coat collar.

"The little fellow laughed at the reception, and without an instant's hesitation stepped into Hennessy's hand, then to his shoulder, and, springing lightly over the surprised trooper's head, landed safely on his feet. It was neatly done, and his evident good nature caught the crowd.

" 'Bully for the Mikado!' 'Hooray for the Jap!' chorused the men, as Hennessy, nowise abashed, took the newcomer by the arm and moved off toward the quarters. Several others, scenting a lark, hurried forward to take a hand, but Hennessy waved them off. 'Lave go,' he said, 'I saw it first.'

"I beckoned the driver to me and inquired concerning the stranger.

"'Don't know nuthin' about him, sir, 'cept he tackled me as I was leaving Benson, and finally made me understand he wanted to come here; offered me a five-dollar gold piece to let him ride, and here he is. Says he wants to learn to be a 'Merican sojer, but he don't savvy United States, not a little bit.'

"I turned to Reynolds, who stood near, telling him to give the Japanese something to eat and then bring him to my quarters. It would never do to leave him with that lot of unredeemed pagans who had him in tow, as they would haze him mercilessly. I mentally decided that he would be sent back to Benson by the ambulance returning next morning.

"An hour later I saw Reynolds and the Jap coming up the company street, the little fellow trotting along beside the tall trooper, talking excitedly and smiling as if thoroughly delighted with the situation. As they reached my veranda, Reynolds saluted and said, 'Here he is, sir.'

"'Who is he, and why is he here?' I asked.

"'Izo Yamato, sir; been in America only a few weeks, and came from San Francisco here to enlist. Says he wants to be a cavalryman. He is twenty-three years old and belongs to a distinguished family.'

"'How comes it that he has been able to tell you so much? I understand from the driver that he speaks little or no English.'

" 'He speaks very little English, sir; his conversation with me was in his own language.'

" 'In Japanese? Where in God's name did you learn Japanese?'

" 'I lived in Kobe for several years, sir.'

" 'Um! well, you understand, of course, that he cannot enlist here. He must first go to some recruiting station and pass an examination, which he couldn't do, both on account of his size and his lack of English. Take care of him to-night, Reynolds, and we will send him back to Benson to-morrow.'

"All this time the Jap had not once taken his eyes from my face, eagerly watching every movement and gesture I made. Suddenly, as he seemed to understand that I had refused his request, he stepped before me, and drawing himself up to his full height, he declared proudly, 'Me Samurai.'

"I looked at Reynolds for an explanation.

" 'He says he is a Samurai, sir, which, translated into English, means that he is a fighting man.'

"I laughed outright, while the smile on the little Jap's face broadened perceptibly, as he spoke a half dozen quick, snappy sentences in Japanese to Reynolds.

" 'He says he doesn't expect to draw pay, sir; he has ample funds, and only wants to learn American soldiering.'

"I couldn't do anything for him in that line, and told Reynolds so. A quick shadow of disappointment passed over the youngster's face, as Reynolds

translated my words, and I really felt sorry for him. He was a handsome little chap, about five feet four, deep-chested, stocky, and muscular, a sort of a big little man, when one came to look him over. He had jet-black hair, laughing eyes, and, while his features were of course after the Oriental type, he really looked more like a Portuguese or some south Europe breed than a Japanese. After some further talk I dismissed them, fully determined to send him out of camp the following morning—but he didn't go.

"Just before taps Reynolds came to me again to ask that his new friend be permitted to remain at the post for a time, explaining that the Jap would furnish his own equipment, and that the government would be reimbursed for the rations he consumed. He urged the case so strongly that I finally inquired what personal interest he had in the matter. At first he seemed loath to explain, but it finally came out.

"'Frankly, sir, I want his society. I haven't a real friend in the troop; of course, I get on well enough with the boys, but they are an illiterate lot, and it's fearfully lonely here at times, having no one to talk with. Young Yamato is an educated gentleman, and it would afford me infinite pleasure to have him with me, to teach him and to have him as my friend.'

"'But the men will devil the life out of him, and you will have a constant fight on your hands if you propose to protect your friend.'

"'I don't think they will trouble him much, as they come to know him better, sir, and he will require no protection.'

"'Why, Reynolds, that big Hennessy has already marked him as his victim. He will surely haze the life out of the little cuss.'

"'That's Yamato's affair, sir. I trust you will permit him to remain at the post; if he can't stand the gaff, then he will leave.'

"'Reynolds, I want to ask you some questions altogether foreign to the subject in hand; questions you needn't answer unless you see fit. You are a man of education and refinement; you know more about matters military than a man in your station is supposed to know; you are more familiar than your officers with the latest text-books on tactics. Were you ever at the Point? How came you to be a private in the service? What is your history, anyway?'

"It was brutal, the manner in which I fired those questions at him, taking a mean advantage of his position as petitioner to pry into his private life. I was ashamed of it as I put the questions; I was more ashamed when his answer came.

"Quickly the colour rose to his cheek, then gradually receded, leaving him deadly pale, as he slowly replied.

"'Captain, the rehearsal of a most unfortunate and unhappy history could not in any manner be of interest or profit to you. I have never been at West

Point, and my training has been more naval than military. I am here because it appears to be the best place for me, and while here I have tried to perform my duties faithfully. That's all I care to say, sir, and I trust you will respect my reticence.' The grey eyes were looking fearlessly into mine.

"It was a merited rebuke, delivered like a gentleman.

"'Right, Sergeant, your history is your own property. You may keep the Jap, and if you need a friend, come to me.'

"There was a suspicious brightness in his eyes and the faintest tremor in his voice as he wrung my proffered hand, saying, 'Thank you, Captain, I'll not forget this.'

"So Yamato remained at the post, the ward and pupil of Sergeant Reynolds. The men attempted some horse-play with him the first day or two, but as Reynolds let it be known that the Jap was his friend, no one cared to carry the fun-making beyond prudent limits. They were very curious, however, and asked the Sergeant all sorts of questions concerning his protégé, to which they received evasive but good-natured replies. Big Hennessy finally cornered the Jap, and proceeded to catechise him.

"'How ould are yez, Chink?'

"'Me have of the years twenty-three,' replied the lad, with his everlasting smile.

"'Twinty-three! Sure, 'tis a big boy ye are gettin' to be; if yez kape on growin' at the prisint rate, yez

will be a full-grown man in thirty or forty years more,' and the Irishman guffawed uproariously.

"'Well, me big man, what did yez do for a livin' in the ould counthry? Did yez wheel the baby waggin and do other light dhry-nursin', or was ye head push in a laundhry?'

"Not understanding, the Jap shook his head.

"Hennessy tried again.

"'What business were yez in? What did ye work at?'

"Extending himself to his full height, with great dignity the Japanese replied:

"'Me no work; in my countree me gentleman; me Samurai.'

"'Samoory, eh? What particular sort av a bug is a Samoory, anyhow?'

"'Him no bug; Samurai ees one man of the fight.'

"'Whoop!' yelled the big trooper derisively; then raising his voice till he could be heard from end to end of the company street, he shouted,

"'Oyez! Oyez! all ye fighters come a-runnin' with yure hats in yure hands, and do riverince to a rale live Samoory from the Far East.'

"Then as the boys quickly gathered about, he made a profound obeisance before the surprised Jap, and resumed.

"'Gintlemen, dhrunkards, short-card min, and sojers! 'Tis me pleasure to inthrojuce to yez me distinguished frind and contimporary, Mister Samoory, av Japan, who has confidentially imparted

to me the information that in his own counthry he was known as a fighter from way back, a hell of a feller, so to spake; and be rayson of his ability as an all-roun' scrapper, the King gave him the title of "Sammy, the Fightin' Man." All mimbers of Troop C will now take warnin'! Yez will plaze kape off the grass when Mister Sammy is awake. Hospital accommodations will be provided for them as forgit themselves. Form in line now, ye divils, and extind the right hand of fellowship to Mister Sammy, who has thravelled all the way to Americky to be showin' us the fine points av the game.'

"The Jap looked puzzled, but as those overgrown children lined up, each in turn extending his hand, the smile broadened and the black eyes fairly beamed with pleasure. This ceremony ended, the boys gave three rousing cheers for 'Sammy, the Fighting Man,' the fun was over, and henceforth he was 'Sammy' to one and all.

"When Reynolds returned later in the day, Sammy delightedly told him of Hennessy's kindness and the great honour conferred upon him by Troop C. Reynolds did not disillusion the boy, but, later on, quietly told the men that while they might guy the Jap and have fun with him, it would not be wise to carry it too far. They assumed by this warning that Reynolds would resent any undue imposition upon his friend; not once did it occur to them that Sammy was amply able to care for himself. Their enlightenment was yet to come.

"Sammy's fitting out and equipment furnished no end of fun for the men. He wanted everything necessary to a ' 'Merican Soldier of the Horse,' and, as he was amply supplied with gold, he soon had his tent, blankets, and weapons. From some unknown source the boys dug out an old, rusty cavalry sabre, which he hailed with evident delight and which he at once proceeded to scour and polish till it shone like silver. Then he ground and whetted and sharpened the old blade till it was keen as a razor. In vain the men explained that the laws of war prohibited a sharpened sword. 'Me want him for cut,' was his only reply, as he went on whetting till the old steel would have split a hair. Then he took his sabre to the blacksmith and requested that he file off the basket, or hand-guard, leaving a plain, straight, unprotected hilt. 'Me like him better; same like in my countree,' he explained.

"It was in securing a horse that he had greatest difficulty. Not being an enlisted man, he could not be permitted to use a government mount, nor could he purchase a horse from Uncle Sam. After a private conversation with Mexican Joe, the proprietor of one of the low groggeries just outside the lines, Mr. Hennessy announced that he had heard of a fine saddle horse for sale by a Greaser a few miles down the valley, and, if his friend Sammy so desired, the horse should be brought up to cantonments on the morrow. Next day a Mexican led a piebald, white-eyed broncho into camp, and within five minutes

departed hurriedly with fifty dollars of Sammy's gold in his pocket. It was a bay and white pinto which Sammy had acquired; round-bodied, long-barreled, with flat, muscular legs and a depth of lung space indicating great staying power, but with a Roman nose and the restless white eyes which told unmistakably of a 'spoiled' saddle horse. Evil lurked in every movement of the slender, pointed ears, and looked boldly out through those wicked eyes. He was one of those untamed and unbreakable specimens of horseflesh occasionally found in the great West.

"'Come, min,' said Hennessy briskly, 'lay hold and help the gintleman to mount his new calico horse,' and taking the rawhide lariat in his hand, he advanced toward the pinto's head to adjust the bridle; then leaping suddenly back, as the brute's teeth snapped together dangerously near his arm, he swung overhead the bridle with its heavy bit, landing it with considerable force between the white eyes.

"'Whoa! ye murdherin' divil, have ye no sinse of dacincy? 'Tis yure new masther, the fightin' man av Japan, who is to ride yez!'

"A dozen willing hands assisted in getting the bridle and saddle in place; then Sammy, who probably had not been astride a horse a dozen times in his life, stepped forward and clambered into the saddle.

"'All set!' shouted Hennessy, as Sammy took up

the reins; 'lave go! the Arizony circus will now begin!'

"Begin it did; for no sooner was the maddened brute released than he lunged wildly into the air, alighting with a sickening jolt upon his forefeet, while his hinder part shot skyward. Sammy's hat flew in one direction and his six-shooter in another, as he clutched frantically at the saddle and endeavoured to recover the stirrups which were sailing about his ears. First to the right, then to the left pitched the horse, the men yelling in sheer delight, 'Stick to him, Sammy!' 'Go it, Calico!' etc. It lasted less than ten seconds, during which time Sammy was all over that pinto horse, travelling from end to end with each sudden unseating; first behind the saddle, then in front of it; clinging desperately first to one side and then the other, as Calico swayed to and fro, like a drunken ship, in the effort to discharge his shifting ballast. The rider had lost the reins, and the horse, without guide or hindrance, his head far down between his forefeet, his back bowed into a squirming knot of muscle, landed with a particularly vicious jolt that shot Sammy into the air, where he somersaulted to a landing in a bunch of bristly soapweed, the breath completely jarred out of him.

"For a half-minute he lay still, and then as the laughing soldiers gathered about, he slowly straightened up and started toward the pinto, who stood with ears perked forward, suspiciously eyeing his

fallen rider. The boy was badly shaken; a thin line of blood from his nose showed red on his white lips, as he unsteadily grasped the rope and warily edged his way to the horse's head. Once within reach his right hand clamped the panting nostrils, while his left gripped an ear; there was a quick, downward pull, an inward push, a sudden upward twist, and Calico lay floundering on the ground with Sammy sitting on his head.

"So quickly was it accomplished not a man of them could have told how it had been done. Sammy was smiling again, as he sat quietly till the beast ceased its struggles; then, getting up, he allowed Calico to scramble to his feet. The white eyes were blazing now and the horse swung his head and squealed angrily as the Jap moved in. Again that iron grip upon nose and ear, the sudden pushing twist, and once more the horse fell heavily, his hoofs impotently threshing the air.

"Twice more the pinto was permitted to rise, and twice more he was ruthlessly thrown, the last time that awful grip holding to his nose till poor Calico was well-nigh dead for want of breath. When Sammy arose the fourth time the horse lay still, and it required a vigorous kick to bring him to his feet, his legs trembling unsteadily beneath him, and for the first time in his life those white eyes showed abject fear. Sammy walked straight to his head, patted the dusty neck, put the reins over, then deliberately and awkwardly climbed into the saddle

and rode slowly down the street. Calico was licked! Licked to a finish! You should have heard the boys cheer the little Jap as he rode back a few minutes later.

"Reynolds had seen it all yet no word escaped him till after the horse had been stabled; then he patted Sammy on the shoulder and spoke a few words in Japanese, which caused the boy's face to light up with satisfaction and his hand to seek Reynolds' with a quick grip.

"The two were inseparable; and under Reynolds' careful tutoring Sammy made rapid progress in English, though some words he never did get straight. He learned to ride, too. When the men were at drill he watched every evolution, listened to every order. He begged so hard, and seemed so anxious to learn, that I finally allowed him in the ranks, a soldier serving without hope of pay or preferment, but as gallant a soldier as ever drew rein, as you shall hear later on.

"He got on famously with the men. Of course, they guyed and chaffed him, all of which he accepted good-naturedly, so long as they kept hands off. He would permit no one to hustle him or indulge in any horse-play. One of the men attempted to manhandle him one day, when Sammy grappled with the fellow and threw him over his shoulder so violently as nearly to break the man's neck. After that they respected his edict of 'hands off.' His thirst for knowledge seemed insatiable. Like a

shadow he followed Reynolds; ever his eager questions, sometimes in English, more often in Japanese, as to *why* or *how*, receiving the tall trooper's reply in kind. It was about three weeks after his arrival that Sammy had his first trouble, which came about in this wise.

"Hennessy, who was a roistering, good-natured fellow when sober, but a quarrelsome brute when in his cups, had spent the afternoon at Mexican Joe's dive, and returning to camp in the evening, was fighting drunk and hankering for trouble.

"It so happened that the tent occupied by Sammy stood at one end of the adobe building in which Hennessy bunked, and the latter, to reach his door, must pass within a few feet of the little Jap, who sat cross-legged on the ground at the open flap of his tent, tinkering at his equipment. Some evil spirit prompted the drunken Irishman to bait the Japanese, for he stopped, and with an ugly leer commanded the boy to get up and get him a cup, as he proposed to initiate all stray Orientals about the camp into the mysteries of American tanglefoot.

" 'Get up, ye sawed-off haythen, and bring me the cup, before I spit and dhrown yez.'

"Sammy smiled and went on fixing his buckle.

" 'Didn't yez hear me, ye naygur? I've a mind to take on a body sarvint in me ould age, and as yure so dam purty and so smilin'-like, yez have been elected by a most overwhelmin' majority as striker to the Honorable Tim Hinnissy, and I'll

start yez in proper by fillin' yez up on this,' and he swung the bottle dangerously near Sammy's head.

"Still smiling, Sammy shook his head. 'No want him, those drink; him make for me pain of the head.'

"Hennessy scowled angrily.

"'Don't want it, don't yez? Well, 'tis time ye were larnin' that whin yure boss gives ye an ordther ye are to move, and not sit squattin' like a cross-legged toad, argifying. Git up, now, or I'll kick a hole through the basement of yure pants!' and he touched the lad none too gently with the toe of his boot.

"Sammy looked surprised, but still shook his head and smiled.

"'No want him, those drink; no geet up.'

"Hennessy's big foot swung back, then forward, as he landed a vicious kick squarely amidships; Sammy rolled over, without doubt the most surprised and the maddest Japanese in the Western Hemisphere. He sprang to his feet, his eyes ablaze, but as Hennessy raised his foot for another kick, Sammy ducked under the tent flap and disappeared within.

"Hennessy howled derisively and stepped forward with the evident intention of following, but just then his head rocked backward from an awful smash dealt him by the youngster, who stepped out of the tent and faced the furious Irishman. It was the hilt of that old cavalry sabre which had

halted Mr. Hennessy's advance. Full and square in his teeth the blow had landed, and as he spat the blood and a couple of floating teeth from between his lacerated lips, he yelled, 'Ye son of a scutt! ye wud play wid the tools, wud yez?' He sprang into the open door of his own quarters, snatched up his sabre, and, leaping out, sent the scabbard clattering to the earth as he strode toward the waiting Jap, who seemed to have forgotten his anger and was now smiling expectantly.

"The blow had instantly sobered the big trooper, but it had also wakened the devil in him, and it was evident to the men who ran flocking to the scene that Hennessy meant to hurt the boy, possibly to kill him.

" 'Now, ye haythen toad, I'll show yez how to use the business end av a cheese knife! I'll just slice off wan ear as a sooveneer an' then I'll spank yez with the flat av me blade; but if ye are nasty about it, by God, I'll take the two av thim,' and with this he made a vicious cut at Sammy's head, the blow slipping harmlessly from the waiting steel.

"Two of the men started to rush Hennessy from the rear to prevent a killing, but Reynolds interfered, saying, 'Let him alone; this isn't your fight.'

" 'But Hennessy's crazy drunk and will kill him!'

"'I don't think so,' calmly replied Reynolds. 'Hennessy will presently see a great light, and, if I mistake not, will be a very sober man when he finishes his job.'

"And it was so. For the first few moments Sammy seemed content to parry the strokes which were rained upon him with all the strength and fury of the enraged Irishman. So furiously did Hennessy press home his attack, and so steadfastly did the little Jap hold his ground, that again and again the blades were engaged up to the very hilt, and it seemed that Sammy's unguarded sword-hand must surely suffer; but each time a deft turn of the wrist put aside the danger. The boy's enigmatical smile, and the ease with which he parried each savage cut and thrust, seemed to drive the big trooper wild, for with a fierce oath he redoubled his effort and sought by sheer weight to break down his adversary's guard.

"Then Sammy's tactics changed, and within ten seconds the spellbound men realised, as did Hennessy, that with all his bulk and strength the big fellow was but as a child, absolutely at the mercy of that smiling, youthful foe, while the sword-play which followed was the talk of many a camp-fire in the years that followed.

"Stepping back a pace, the Japanese suddenly set his sabre whirling in a peculiar wheel-like movement, which opposed a circular shield of steel to Hennessy's weapon. Swifter and swifter whirled that shining thing, its sibilant hiss growing more and more venomous, menacing, and deadly. Utterly confounded, Hennessy paused, his sword-arm extended, too dumbfounded to give ground or to drop his point.

Suddenly the guardless sabre shot out, and, engaging the Irishman's blade, tore it from his hand and sent it flying over the heads of the crowd, to fall harmlessly fifty feet away. Then, as his arms dropped limply, the grey of a great fear stole over Hennessy's face, not the fear of a coward, but the fear of a brave man who looks into the eyes of a death he cannot parry,—while that silent serpent of steel darted through his hair, between ear and skull, first on one side, then the other; passed like lightning within a hairbreadth of his jugular; then under each armpit, or flicked a buttom from the bosom of his shirt, as if seeking the most deadly spot to place its fatal sting. Yet no harm came to the Irishman; not one drop of blood did he lose.

"In a minute it was ended. Sammy swung his sabre upward and brought it down flat-side, landing with a sounding whack just above Hennessy's left ear, knocking all the sense out of him for five minutes. Turning to Reynolds, the boy laughingly said, 'Me no hurt him; him no Samurai; him big boy, not know how for make those fight.' Then he sat down before his tent and resumed the repairs on his buckle.

"That settled it. Sammy had made good as a fighting man, and from that day he was the idol of the Company. Hennessy was thoroughly whipped, and, like a real man, he knew it and bore no malice. After an hour he emerged from his quarters, and walking up to the Jap, grasped his hand.

" 'Sammy, yure the boss. God knows ye should av kilt me for the dhirty cur that I was, but ye didn't, and I'm yure frind. If yez want a striker to clane yure horse, or to be doin' yure maynial wurruk, it's meself that's lookin' for the job, for ye are the biggest man I iver hooked up wid, if ye are put up in a small bundle.'

"Sammy's smile broadened, as he warmly shook the Irishman's hand.

" 'Hennessy one fine boy, when he no make of those drink; it is good for be friends.'

"Hennessy spent ten days in the guardhouse for his drunken folly, and it was Sammy who regularly carried to him tidbits from his own mess.

"We had enjoyed a season of comparative quiet, but the long expected break came early in July. The entire Apache nation, which had for months been seething with unrest, now broke into open revolt with the usual campaign of murder and pillage.

"At dusk one evening a courier, who had ridden seventy miles since noon, brought orders from the Colonel to intercept a war party of seventy or eighty Tontos, who were reported raiding up the San Simeon Valley, bound for Sonora. Company F, at Fort Bowie, would cut them off from the outlet at the upper end of the valley, when it was supposed the reds would swing to the westward and, skirting the hills, would cross the Divide at or near Dragoon

Summit and make for the Mexican border through the foothills to the west of Dos Cabesos. By hard riding it might be possible to intercept them at Hanging Rock Springs, a favourite camping-place for such expeditions.

"Hurried preparations were made, and at three o'clock next morning Troop C filed out from cantonments on its long ride. As men and horses were fresh, we rapidly put mile after mile behind us in the cool morning hours. A hurried breakfast as the sun came up from behind the distant Dragoons, and then began the dreary ride across the desolate stretch of hill and plain which lay between us and Hanging Rock, the point at which I hoped to bag our game. Mile after mile we jogged under the blazing Arizona sun, the rear of the little column hidden in the blinding alkali dust, which rose in clouds from the dry, parched earth. Far to the front, with the flankers, rode Reynolds, and with him Sammy, who had entered upon this man-hunt with all the enthusiasm of a boy.

"At noon we halted for an hour, to rest the horses and eat our slender ration; then on we pushed across the barren wastes toward our destination. At mid-afternoon the heat became terrific, the horses suffering severely and many of them beginning to show evidences of the twelve-hours' stretch. Hanging Rock, fifteen miles away, was now in plain view across the valley, but it began to be questionable whether the command could reach it before dusk, and

it would be most imprudent to scale the hill and enter that rocky den after the sun had gone down.

"Nature, in a freakish mood, had pushed the long shelf of rock out from the summit of the divide, and most strange it was that there, high up above the plain, should bubble forth from beneath the hanging scarp of stone, a great spring of clear, cool water. The ridge was a wilderness of giant boulders, a jungle of ragged rocks, thick strewn, as if scattered by some Titan hand in the far-off days when earth was young.

"Suddenly the left flankers, a half mile in advance, drew up, and Reynolds' signal told me that something unusual was beyond. A moment later we saw a single horseman emerge from one of the numerous blind cañons on the left and ride rapidly toward the waiting soldiers. Reaching them he seemed to confer for a moment, then Reynolds wheeled and dashed back toward the column, waving his hat and shouting some unintelligible message. As I rode forward to meet the flying horseman, his white face warned me of evil tidings.

"'Captain, a scout from Fort Grant says that the Colonel's wife and his two little children, with a detail of six men, left Grant at noon, to meet the Colonel at Huachuca; two hours after they left the post, news of the break reached the camp, and Captain Dunlap sent this scout after the Colonel's wife to bring her back. He ran into a band of Apaches who were following the trail of the ambu-

lance, and he thinks they will overtake it at Hanging Rock. Unable to warn the detail, and with another band of Indians between him and Grant, he cut around and was making for Huachuca when he spied us.'

"God! It was fifteen miles to Hanging Rock, and even now the little detail might be surrounded. And a woman, too! It meant swift action; so, turning to the command, I told the men the situation, explaining that the lives of our Colonel's wife and children, and of the six troopers, depended upon our reaching Hanging Rock before the reds could complete their devilish work. As many of the horses were exhausted, it would depend upon those who had the best mounts to make the rescue, so I ordered each man to do his best and started the entire troop upon a free-for-all run for the Rock. Within ten minutes Company C was strung out for a mile across the desert, the better horses forging to the front, the weaker falling to the rear.

"Fortunately, my horse was in fair condition and carried me well to the front. I rode hard, but far in advance of all raced Reynolds' big bay and Sammy's pinto. An hour, which seemed an eternity, had passed, when less than a score of troopers reached the foot of the ridge a mile from the spring. As one after another of the horses dropped back exhausted, I wondered how many would be with me at the finish, and if we should be in time.

"Suddenly from the heights above came the far-

away bang of a Springfield, then another, while the faint puff of rifle smoke floating from the summit told us that the Tontos were at work. Up the slope we went as rapidly as the reeking horses would carry us; far to the front, now disappearing behind the rocks, rode Reynolds and Sammy. The reports of the Springfields came ever clearer to us as we toiled up the rocky slope, and now and again we heard the exultant yells of the savages as they pressed their attack.

"A quarter of a mile from the spring my horse wavered, then stumbled and fell, unable to carry me another rod. Snatching my pistols from the holsters, I ran on, hoping against hope that we might be in time. A louder chorus of savage yells and a popping of the Colts told me that Reynolds and Sammy had reached the scene. Breathless with the uphill run, I finally turned a giant boulder, and the little amphitheatre about the spring was spread out before me.

"To the rear of the water hole stood an ambulance, the mules all down; just behind the spring, and cowering against the overhanging rock, was the Colonel's wife, with her helpless little ones; while lying about were five motionless figures in faded army blue, which told the story of brave men who had battled to the last and had died the soldier's death. Beside the praying woman knelt a wounded trooper, calmly shooting into the horde of savage figures who were darting and dodging amidst the rocks; while to the

left and in front stood Sammy and Reynolds, their Colts spitting viciously at the Indians, who were evidently surprised and disturbed by the unwelcome re-enforcements. The men were directly between the Indians and the woman, and as the savages hoped to capture the latter alive they were not using their guns, but had attacked the Jap and his comrade with knives and war clubs.

"As I looked, the wounded man went down, and, casting aside their empty weapons, Reynolds and Sammy drew their sabres and stood between the kneeling woman and the two score of yelping beasts. A moment later Reynolds toppled backward from a murderous thrust in the side and a blow from a war club upon the head, delivered simultaneously, and Sammy was alone, confronting that swarm of naked cut-throats. A half-dozen of my men now came running up the trail, and in an instant their Springfields were roaring as they pressed forward, shooting, and shouting encouragement to the boy.

"And then, startlingly clear and vibrant, above the din of the yelling savages, above the shouts of the men and the banging of the Springfields, rose in a foreign tongue a strange, weird chant, full and sonorous as a trumpet-call. It was the battle song of the Samurai,—Sammy's answering challenge—the war-cry of his fathers. About him shimmered and hissed that impenetrable circle of steel, and though they hacked and stabbed in frantic haste, not once did a hostile thrust reach beyond that

matchless guard. Like a thing of light, the shining weapon darted here and there, claiming with each touch its tithe of blood.

"The leader of the redskins, a hideously painted buck, seeing the rescuers near at hand, made a sudden feint and, dropping upon one knee, attempted to stab the boy through the abdomen. It was his last stroke, for as Sammy sprang back his blade whirled downward, the savage hand dropped to the earth, lopped clean at the wrist as with an axe, and the next instant a life went out through an ugly gash in the dusky throat. Louder rose that rhythmic chant, while ever, like some thin flame, the slender blade played swiftly about the swordsman.

"Reynolds struggled to rise, but was too badly hurt, and sank beside the prostrate trooper. Never pausing in his song, Sammy stepped in front of his fallen friend, and as the steel told on its fateful tale, high up above the din of strife the sonorous words rang out:

" 'Heed me, oh mighty ones, my fathers of the past! The spirit lives within thy son! See! the arm is strong, the hand is sure, and with each stroke the life wine flows! To the sacred annals of our house I add another deed. Hail to ye, oh mighty dead! Hail! heroes of Yamato's line!'

"Swiftly and more deadly flamed that gleaming brand, as Sammy, seemingly endowed with more than human strength, now took the offensive and

pressing into the struggling band, made a sudden, swinging side-cut which swept a head completely from its moorings, then plunged a foot of steel into another naked breast.

"It was more than the Tontos could stand, and they gave way before the Jap's sudden onslaught, taking refuge behind the rocks. A dozen troopers were now in action, their fire soon causing the Indians to scatter like quail along the rocky ridge, where it would have been foolhardy to pursue.

"As the Indians fled Sammy dropped his dripping point, and turning, ran back to Reynolds, and was in the act of lifting him when an Indian, who had paused in his flight, rested his rifle barrel upon a boulder, and, taking deliberate aim, shot the Jap through the body. The little fellow pitched forward and lay so motionless we thought him dead; but as the boys tenderly lifted and turned him he smiled faintly, as he said, 'Me all right; help Meester Reynolds.' Then the mercy of unconsciousness came to him, and he lay white and still as one whose earthly cares were at an end.

"It was the wickedest little fight I've ever seen; five troopers were dead and three were desperately wounded, while there were eighteen good Indians to balance the account, seven of them Sammy's. But the woman and her babies were safe, so the sacrifice had not been wholly in vain.

"The surgeon shortly reached the scene and hurriedly examined the wounded men. To my

look of inquiry, he replied, 'Reynolds and the other man will pull through, but Sammy is booked, spine broken.' From the troopers gathered close about came a half-suppressed sob, which told, more eloquently than words, how the lad had won them.

"Throwing out a strong picket, I made quick preparations for the night. Within an hour the remainder of the command had struggled in, the Colonel's wife and children were housed in the ambulance, supper was cooked, then the stillness and the grandeur of an Arizona night was upon that blood-stained bivouac.

"Reynolds, his head bandaged and the long cut in his side dressed and stitched, slept fitfully, muttering incoherently of unknown people and places. For Sammy, nothing could be done; his hurt was mortal, and within a few hours the great Silence, the Nirvana of his faith, would be his. Presently the moon came swinging up into the cloudless, starlit sky, driving back the shadows, toning the rough outlines of the rocks, and making beautiful the rugged amphitheatre about the spring. By ten o'clock it was as light as at early dawn, while the surgeon and I sat beside the now conscious boy as he lay upon the rough blanket bed.

"'Sammy,' I said, as I took his hand, 'you are badly wounded and it may be that you will not again return to your people. Will you tell me of your home, and will you give me some message for those who are dear to you?"

"There was wondrous strength in the grip he gave my hand, and his voice was steady as, in halting, uncertain English, he told me of his birthplace in far-away Japan, his beautiful Japan that he would never see again; of his father, the 'grand man' who had sent him out into the world that he might learn the ways of the 'Merican Soldier,' and thus be of greater service to his country in some day of need. He told us of the great palace upon a hill, which had been his home, and spoke reverently of the little mother who waited for his return. He was most anxious that his father should know he had fallen in battle, and that many men had felt his steel before he went down.

"'Me Samurai,' he added, simply; 'it is good that Samurai should die in those fight.'

"Reynolds, unconscious and feverishly moaning, lay a few feet distant, and Sammy asked that he be moved so that he might lie beside his friend. Just beside his bed the moonlight showed a tiny desert flower, a flower not born to blush unseen, but destined, thank God, to brighten the dying hour of that home-hungry little Japanese. He plucked the flower, and lifting it to his lips, he said, 'Many flowers in my countree.' After this he lay very still, gazing steadily up into the limitless, jewelled space, as if trying to fathom the eternal mystery of life and death. It was nearly midnight when I noticed that his hands were growing cold, and found that the respiration was growing very laboured.

The surgeon, after feeling the pulse, beckoned me aside to whisper that the hour was come.

"As we bent over him, his eyes sought mine and he said, haltingly, 'Captaine and that doctor man are been verre good to Sammy.' Turning his head, he noticed that the blanket had fallen away from his comrade's shoulder; with great effort he reached out, and pulling the blanket in place, patted the shoulder lovingly, and laid the desert flower upon Reynolds' breast. 'Him my friend,' he whispered; 'him Samurai, too; him 'Merican Samurai.' For a few minutes his pulse fluttered intermittently, when I saw that his lips were moving, and bending low, I caught the faintly murmured words, 'Nippon! Nippon! Samurai!' Then the brave heart was still forever, and we knew that a gallant soul had passed.

"So died a Samurai; giving his young life in defense of the helpless ones of an alien people, a people who regarded him and his kind as pagans. Surely, in the final muster, the Great Commander, making no distinction as to race or creed, will reward soldiers such as he.

"It was a sad returning to the home camp. Reynolds, raving in delirium, was conveyed slowly in the ambulance, and it was not until after poor Sammy had been buried that he regained consciousness. A fortnight later he emerged from the hospital, gaunt and haggard, with deep lines on his brow from this last sorrow, for he had loved his little comrade with all the strength of his great nature.

"The men came in a body to request that Sammy should be given a soldier's funeral. The Colonel, who had arrived, and had heard how the boy died, cried like a child as he told the men they should have their wish.

"At sunset we laid him to rest, with full military honours. The salute was fired; then, with tears coursing down his bronzed cheek, the bugler stepped to the head of that lowly grave and sounded taps—the soldier's 'good-night.' Sweetly and sadly those mournful cadences floated out over the desert, Troop C's farewell to little Sammy.

"Two days later a message came from Department Headquarters inquiring if one Izo Yamato, a Japanese, was at Huachuca, and if so to extend to him every courtesy, etc., etc., by order of the War Department. I replied, briefly detailing the history of his death. I also wrote the Japanese consul at San Francisco, telling him all.

"A month slipped by, when an ambulance and escort arrived from Benson. Sammy's father, Count Yamato, a distinguished man of middle age, had come to take the body home. Through an interpreter and Reynolds he heard the story of Sammy's gallant fight and death. He was much moved and, though his eyes were dim with unshed tears, he gravely saluted the Colonel and myself, and declared himself content, since his son had died as befitted a Samurai of his rank.

"Through the interpreter, we told him of the great friendship between his son and Reynolds. It was after a long talk with the Count next day that Reynolds sought the Colonel with a strange request. He explained that, as his three years of service would expire within a month, he desired the Colonel's influence with the Department in securing his immediate discharge. The Count had offered formally to adopt him as his son and, having no ties which bound him to his native land, the Sergeant had accepted. Count Yamato seconded the petition, stating that having lost his only son, his heart had gone out to the gallant young American whom he now desired to make his heir. It was easily arranged, and two days later they started west with Sammy's remains.

"Within a week or two after I, too, was in San Francisco, ordered to duty at the Presidio. As I crossed the ferry from Oakland, we ran close under the stern of a great Pacific liner bound for the Orient. On the after-deck stood a tall figure, and Sergeant Reynolds' voice came to me across the waters, 'Good-bye and God bless you, Captain.' The Count stood beside him, and I knew that below decks little Sammy's body was going home to sleep beside his fathers. Into the splendour of the sunset which lay beyond the Golden Gate, to the far-off land of flowers, sailed the mighty ship bearing my two Samurai, the living and the dead."

The Colonel paused in his story, and taking from his pocket a letter postmarked Tokio, Japan, May 1, 1904, he read the following extract:

"'As a military man you are, of course, interested in the war. Here in Japan we hear little of events at the front save the official dispatches, with which you are already familiar. Yesterday, however, I witnessed an event of more than passing interest. During the recent desperate fighting between the Japanese torpedo flotilla and the Russian battleships about Port Arthur, a lieutenant-commander of the Japanese navy, in command of a destroyer, made a daring and successful attack upon one of the enemy's vessels. He was killed in the action, and his body brought home for interment. Never have I seen so splendid a spectacle nor so impressive a service. In attendance were the Emperor and the entire Imperial Court, as well as the highest officers of the Army and Navy, all ablaze with gold lace and jewelled decorations. The body rested upon a magnificent catafalque of purple velvet, bearing the national arms and draped with the battle-flags of his ship. It seems that the officer had been a Samurai, a member of some noble family, and, in recognition of his gallantry in action, a part of the ceremony was the conferring by the Emperor on the dead man of the Order of the Golden Kite, thus marking him as one of Japan's national heroes. After this ceremony was ended, an old, white-haired noble, said to be the dead man's father,

took from an attendant a package, which proved to be a silken American flag, with which he reverently covered the casket. Then the crowd slowly filed out, leaving the dead hero alone under the folds of Old Glory. It is said to have been an event unprecedented in the history of Japan, but I could learn little concerning it. Those I asked either didn't know, or wouldn't tell. Strange people, these Japanese.'"

The Colonel folded up the letter and replaced it in his pocket. As he rose to bid us good-night, he said:

"I have since learned that the daring commander who gave his life to Japan, and whose body lay in the old temple, shrouded in the American colours, was Sergeant Reynolds of old Troop C, one of my Two Samurai."

END